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THE POETS' PLEASAUNCE.

BY

EDEN WARWICK.

LONDON:
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THE

Poets' Pleasaunce:

GARDEN OF ALL SORTS OF PLEASANT FLOWERS,

WHICH OUR PLEASANT POETS HAVE, IN PAST TIME,

FOR PASTIME, PLANTED.

By EDEN WARWICK.

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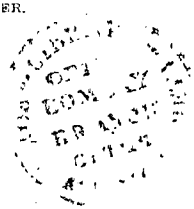
"——— a floury grene,
Full thick of grass, full soft and sweet,
With floures fele faire undir feet,
And little used."

CHAUCER.



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Preface.

The design of the present work is to illustrate the extent of homage which our best Poets, prior to the present century, have paid to Nature, in Flowers—her most delicately beautiful productions. It is proposed in fact to treat of Flowers on the plan which "Christopher North" suggests would make a beautiful work if applied to Birds, viz.—to collect all that in former times has been sung in their praise; and it is the intention of the Author, in a subsequent volume, to carry out this suggestion respecting the feathered Favourites of Nature.

At the same time it is intended to exhibit a History of the Poetry of Flowers, both collectively and individually; confining the selection, however, to those Flowers only which have been celebrated in verse during at least two of the periods into which we have divided the Poets. For the purpose of developing these Histories more clearly, the extracts have, in each instance, been arranged in chronological order, according to the *periods* in which they were written. These periods are defined, and the reasons for their adoption given, in the "Essays on Floral

Poetry;" and an Index to the early British Poets whose writings have been perused for the purpose of this work, is prefixed for the guidance of the reader in respect to dates.

As far as regards Poets prior to the present century, the selections, it will be found, are nearly complete; further I do not profess to carry my extracts, except by the occasional introduction of such brief allusions, as, being scattered through the general works of more modern Poets, are less known and less frequently cited than those entire pieces on Flowers in which they have so profusely indulged. It is in this respect, and in its chronological and systematic arrangement, that, I believe, this compilation will be found principally to differ from its predecessors, in all of which the old Poets have been neglected to make room for our cotemporaries, whose writings are in every one's hands.

With the exception of Shakspere's (whose beautiful illustrations of Flowers it would have been treason to omit), no purely dramatic works, anonymous pieces, or avowed translations have been quoted; and the extracts, moreover, have been made only from those Poets whose writings have, by universal consent, procured for them a niche in the "Temple of Fame."

The INTRODUCTION is an attempt to revive, in modern phraseology, a favourite style of composition of the Elizabethan age; in which, under the allegory of a "Peep into Parnassus," "The Muses' Elysium," &c., were depicted the manners of cotemporary

and deceased Poets; and from which we often gain an insight into the character of writers of whose social habits we should otherwise have been wholly ignorant.

For the Flower borders at the commencement of each chapter I am indebted to the pencil of Mr. H. N. Humphreys; and I cannot but acknowledge my peculiar good fortune in having obtained the congenial aid of so experienced a Naturalist, whose knowledge is so happily combined with the power of tasteful delineation, and who has here shown how successfully the beauties of Middle-age Art may be rendered available to modern purposes.

E. W.

Chronological List of British Poets.

Division I.

1380 to 1570.

	BORN	DIED
Gower, John	1326	1408
Chaucer, Geoffrey	1328	1400
Lydgate, John	1375	1462
James I. (of Scotland)	1395	1437
Henrysoun, Robert	1425	1495
Dunbar, William	1460	1520
Douglass, Gawin	1475	1522
Skelton, John	1463	1529
Hawes, Stephen	1480	....
Lyndesay, Sir David	1490	1553
Heywood, John	1500	1565
Wyatt, Sir Thomas	1503	1541
Surrey, Earl of	1516	1547

	BORN	DIED
Grimoald, Nicholas	1520	1563
Edwards, Richard	1523	1566
Tusser, Thomas	1523	1580
Scot, Alexander	1525	....
Harington, John	1534	1582
Sackville, Lord Buckhurst	1527	1608
Turberville, George	1540	....
Gascoigne, George	1540	1578

Division III.

1570 to 1640.

Montgomery, Alexander	....	....
Green, Robert	1550	1592
Raleigh, Sir Walter	1552	1618
Spenser, Edmund	1553	1599
Lylie, John	1553	1600
Sidney, Sir Philip	1554	1586
Breton, Nicholas	1555	1624
Chapman, George	1557	1634
Warner, William	1558	1608
Southwell, Robert	1560	1595
Watson, Thomas	1560	1591
Lodge, Thomas	1560	1625
Harington, Sir John	1561	1612

	BORN	DIED
Daniel, Samuel	1562	1619
Marlowe, Christopher	1562	1592
Sylvester, Joshua	1563	1618
Drayton, Michael	1563	1631
Shakspere, William	1564	1616
Constable, Henry	1566	....
Wotton, Sir Henry	1568	1639
Davies, Sir John	1570	1626
Smith, William	1571	....
Hume, Alexander	....	1609
Donne, Dr. John	1573	1631
Hall, Dr. Joseph	1574	1656
Jonson, Ben	1574	1637
Barnfield, Richard	1574	....
Peacham, Henry	....	....
Fletcher, John	1576	1625
Heywood, Thomas	1580	....
Alexander, Wm., Earl of Stirling	1580	1640
Corbet, Richard	1582	1635
Davison, Francis	1582	....
Beaumont, Sir John	1582	1628
Fletcher, Phineas	1584	1650
Fletcher, Giles	1585	1623
Beaumont, Francis	1585	1615
Drummond, William	1585	1649
Niccols, Richard	1584	....
Kinaston, Sir Francis	1585	1642

	BORN	DIED
Murray, David	1586	....
Wither, George	1588	1667
Carew, Thomas	1589	1639
Browne, William	1590	1645
King, Dr. Henry	1591	1669
Herrick, Robert	1591	....
Quarles, Francis	1592	1644
Herbert, George	1593	1632
Shirley, James	1594	1666
Hannay, Patrick	1594	....
May, Thomas	1595	1650
Mennis, Sir John	1598	1670
Smith, Dr. James	1604	1667
Randolph, Thomas	1605	1634
Habington, William	1605	1654
Chalkhill, John	....	....

Division III.

1640 to 1725.

D'Avenant, Sir William	1605	1668
Waller, Edmond	1605	1687
Fanshawe, Sir Richard	1607	1666
Milton, John	1608	1674

	BORN	DIED
Suckling, Sir John	1608	1641
Cartwright, William	1611	1643
Crashaw, Richard	1615	1650
Butler, Samuel	1612	1680
Cleveland, John	1613	1658
Vaughan, Henry	1614	1695
Denham, Sir John	1615	1668
Lovelace, Richard	1618	1658
Cowley, Abraham	1618	1667
Sherburne, Sir Edward	1618	....
Marvell, Andrew	1620	1678
Chamberlayne, William	1619	1689
Stanley, Thomas	1620	1678
Cotton, Charles	1630	1687
Phillips, Catherine	1631	1664
Dryden, John	1631	1701
Newcastle, Duchess of	....	1673
Roscommon, Earl of	1633	1684
Sedley, Sir Charles	1639	1701
Dorset, Earl of	1637	1706
Rochester, Earl of	1647	1680
Buckingham, Duke of	1649	1721
Prior, Matthew	1664	1721
Pomfret, John	1667	1703
Swift, Jonathan	1667	1745
Phillips, Ambrose	1671	1749
Garth, Sir Samuel	....	1718

	BORN	DIED
Addison, Joseph	1672	1719
Watts, Dr. Isaac	1674	1748
Phillips, John	1676	1708
Parnell, Thomas	1679	1718
Somerville, William	1682	1742
Hill, Aaron	1684	....
Tickell, Thomas	1686	1740
Ramsay, Allan	1686	1758
Pope, Alexander	1688	1744
Gay, John	1688	1732
Winchelsea, Countess of	....	1720
Green, Matthew	1696	1737
Broome, Dr. William	1690	1745
Savage, Richard	1698	1743
Young, Dr. Edward	1681	1765

Division IV.

1725 to 1780.

Thomson, James	1700	1748
Blair, Robert	1699	1746
Dyer, John	1700	1758
Mallet, David	1700	1765
Harte, Walter	....	....

	BORN	DIED
Hamilton, William	1704	1754
Dodsley, Robert	1703	1764
Armstrong, Dr. John	1709	1779
Johnson, Dr. Samuel	1709	1784
Lyttleton, Lord	1709	1773
Moore, Dr. Edward	1711	....
Thompson, William	1712	1760
Hammond, Dr. James	1710	1742
Shenstone, William	1714	1763
Brown, Dr. John	1715	....
Gray, Thomas	1716	1771
Smollett, Thomas	1721	1771
Blacklock, Thomas	1721	1791
Cotton, Nathaniel	1721	1788
Grainger, Dr. James	1721	1766
Merrick, James	1720	1766
Akenside, Mark	1721	1770
Collins, William	1720	1756
Whitehead, William	1715	1785
Warton, Thomas	1728	1790
Warton, Joseph	1722	1800
Smart, Christopher	1722	1770
Anstey, Christopher	1724	1805
Cooper, Dr. John G.	1723	....
Carter, Elizabeth	1717	1806
Chapone, Hester	1727	1801
Mason, William	1725	1797

	BORN	DIED
Goldsmith, Oliver	1728	1774
Percy, Dr. Thomas	1728	1811
Cunningham, John	1729	1773
Scott, John	1730	1783
Falconer, William	1730	1769
Lloyd, Robert	1733	1764
Mickle, William J.	1734	1788
Langhorne, John	1735	1779
Beattie, James	1735	1803
Churchill, Charles	1741	1764
Jones, Sir William	1746	1794
Bruce, Michael	1746	1767
Logan, John	1748	1788
Chatterton, Thomas	1752	1770
Lovibond, Edward	....	1775
Fergusson, Robert	1751	1774

Division V.

1780 to ....

Cowper, William	1731	1800
Burns, Robert	1759	1779

&c. &c. &c.

The Introduction.

A Reverie.

I had just concluded a long course of reading in the Poets, who from Chaucer to the present day have adorned English Literature, and was sitting at a late hour musing on the subject of my studies, when methought I was suddenly transported, on the wings of a gentle wind, into a region whose prevailing characteristic was a sweet stillness, where "not a breath crept through the rosy air," which was redolent of the intermingled perfumes of the numerous and varied flowers which enamelled the ground. At a short distance rose a circular temple, surrounded by lofty pillars, of pure white marble, partially veiled by opal-tinted clouds, which descending around the base, seemed to support it above the earth, and at the same time painted with their gorgeous hues the reflecting surfaces of the polished columns.

As I approached, the clouds rolled away, and I perceived a doorway in the building, over which was inscribed, in black letter, **"Open to those who surmount the Clouds."** As there was no apparent obstruction, I ventured to enter, and after passing through a vestibule adorned with statues commemorative of the most noted names in British Poetry, I advanced into an inner circular apartment, or enclosed space, whose only roof was

"That whereon the gods do tread;"

for the glorious many-coloured clouds, in hue like the messenger of Jove, formed the resplendent canopy in whose lustrous haze the summits of the airy-looking walls were softly blended.

The apartment was ornamented with numerous pictures, varied and relieved by single statues and sculptured groups, composed of divers chaste-coloured marbles.

I perceived that these sculptures and paintings were figurative of the principal British Poets; some allegorical, some representing their principal works, and others the authors themselves. Thus, the four seasons of the year with their appropriate emblems, amongst which the Daisy was conspicuous in each, represented CHAUCER. A brilliant but not oppressive Sun, whose beams penetrated the deepest recesses of a dark and fearful wood, and dragged into light its most secret places, allegorically portrayed the heart-searching power of SHAKSPERE. A full Moon, whose light threw a piercing ray on the obscure solemnity of a dark night, which previously appeared impenetrable by human eye, called up the image of MILTON, singing of "things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme." A figure of celestial airiness and grace, combined with a majestic staidness and holy simplicity, extended a favouring glance on one, who, reclining on the grassy bank of a silvery river,* besought her protection, and dedicated to her service the best efforts of his Muse. It joyed me to see the favouring glance of the "Faerie Queen" repay the labours of the imaginative SPENSER. My attention was next arrested by a quaint device, which, with some difficulty, I discovered to be a Chart of England and Wales, in which the rivers were portrayed by beautiful naiads and river gods, the open country by hamadryads, and each county by its appropriate productions. This was a delineation of DRAYTON'S voluminous and fanciful "Polyolbion." Intermixed with these were many others of much beauty, but which it would occupy too much time to describe.

Continuing to advance, I arrived at a series of figures of an entirely different character, many of which were disagreeable to the sight. All allegories drawn from Nature ceased; and classes of writers, rather than individuals, were represented. In divers places, I saw figures bowing

* "Amongst the coolly shade
Of the green alders, by the Mulla's shore."—COLIN CLOUT.

in attitudes of fawning adulation and affected respect to an unrepresented personage. These figures had, Janus-like, two faces: the side next to the person apparently addressed, glowed with the most intense admiration, mingled with abject humility; the other side exhibited inherent vanity and petty insolence, associated with undisguised contempt. Other figures laboured incessantly at the task of writing, and while I wondered at the facility of composition with which the Muse inspired such rapid penmen, I saw a guinea dropt into the withered unemployed hand, and the illumination which its touch seemed to spread over the emaciated hungry face of the receiver, told me whence the pen's inspiration flowed. I recoiled with disgust from the repulsive sight, wondering to see statues recording the works of such men. Further reflection, and the remembrance of their names, however, satisfied me that under better inspiration, even they had produced works worthy of commemoration, and thus gained from the justice of the Muse a niche in her Temple; while the dark and prevailing side of their characters was portrayed, in order to warn aspirants to fame against the vices which had overwhelmed and paralyzed these naturally brilliant geniuses. Figures more repulsive than any I had hitherto seen followed next. They were those of snarling cowardly Dogs, which appeared to be flying and barking at the heels of every passenger. Private pique, or the hope of frightening the assailed into throwing them a sop, seemed the only provocatives. I had no difficulty in recognizing the Satirists. Here also sat a figure, oppressed by bodily deformity, anxiously watching a variety of gay and glittering groups of elegantly attired persons, in whose pleasures he was unable to partake. One group was lounging over the table of a coffee-house, and criticising a small pamphlet wet from the press; others were engrossed at ombre or quadrille, while others were laughing heartily at a lewd joke, which brought a blush into the face of a young girl, apparently a novice at the mysteries of the tea-table. The watchful figure seemed intent to discover the motives which actuated the persons he beheld, and was not long in arriving at the too just conclusion, that "self-love" was the basis of all their actions. Applying the result of his limited observation to the world at large, he seemed to felicitate himself on having discovered the secret springs of human conduct, and the Author of the "Essay on Man" was brought forcibly to my mind.

Hurrying away from these very uninteresting groups, I passed several figures, some of which were of a more agreeable caste, until my attention was arrested by one reclining on a "sofa," and evidently occupied in the pleasing "task" of inditing the simple truth, without regard to the pleasure or hatred of the world. The countenance exhibited religious faith, combined with the deepest humility, and possessed a sweetness and simplicity which inspired love and confidence. He wrote with ease and freedom, penning down his thoughts as they arose, without labouring to clothe them in glowing language, or to elicit anything strikingly new or unusually profound. After the moral degradation which I had been contemplating, it was a great relief to gaze upon the kindly face of COWPER. The next figure was that of a Rustic, occupied at the plough; but his earnest upward look of gratitude and respect filled me with awe, for I found myself in the presence of BURNS, addressed by the "Scottish Muse."

Further on, I beheld Prometheus bound to a rock with the ceaseless vulture gnawing his entrails, and I sorrowfully thought on the mighty heart of BYRON consumed by its own fires. Close to this, stood a compound form, whose head was that of an Angel, the breast that of a Man, and the lower parts those of a Demon; yet was not the figure incongruous, for the angelic character of the upper parts shed a ray of beauty over, and in part concealed, the repulsiveness of the lower. To SHELLEY alone could I assign this Sphinx-like form. Next was a figure of Endymion, gently reposing on "heaped-up flowers," with eyelids half-raised to meet the tender ray of a vivid moon-beam.* My attention was next attracted to a picture which expressed more tender melancholy than any representation I had yet seen. Cowering amid the leaves of a withering Myrtle sat a Ring-dove brooding over her young, yet with outstretched neck seeming to watch mournfully the flight of her mate, who was just visible in the distance.†

It was not until my eyes had wandered over the entire series, that I became conscious that I was in the presence of a superior being, who was seated on an elevated throne, nearly in the centre of the apartment. It was one of the unstartling contrarieties characteristic of dreams, that I felt no surprise at not having previously noticed the throne and its

* KEATS. † MRS. HEMANS.

occupant. However, I now approached, and with an involuntary feeling of awe and reverence made my obeisance. She signed me to rise — I did so, and beheld a majestic and beautiful woman, verging, perhaps, towards the decline of life; but certainly not more than to give an expression of intellectual strength to her original beauty. Her features were of a fair Saxon character, "with yelewe haire like to the Sonnis beame," and her blue eyes also betrayed the same origin. Her's had evidently been a happy and vigorous youth; yet her countenance bore, beneath the smile of hope, the traces of past sorrow. She resembled a bride, who had for a time been deserted by a once loving husband, but having at last been restored to his repentant heart, received him without doubt or reproach.

On a pedestal by her side lay an ancient British harp, carved out of the heart of a consecrated oak, and entwined by a wreath composed of the Rose, the Thistle, and the Shamrock. I knew myself to be in the presence of The British Muse.

I was too deeply impressed with veneration to speak; but in a soft silvery tone she thus addressed me:—"You have beheld the representations of my varied troop of worshippers. Behind you silver gates, are the gardens in which their originals repose. It is permitted you to enter."

She spoke no more; but while my heart glowed with the delightful anticipation of seeing those, whose god-like minds had illumined the earth, now enjoying a happy and gentle rest after their labours, the silver gates, self-moving on their hinges to the sound of aerial music, opened, and displayed to view a long vista of trees; beyond which, spread out as far as the eye could scan, a garden-land, rich in every variety of landscape. There was the wild heath, rivalling the tints of the sky in the richness of its purple flowers and golden gorse; the cultivated knot and smooth-shaven lawn; the mountain wild and valley sweet; while copse, wood, wilderness, and pasture, through which flowed rivers and murmured brooks, broken by dashing cataracts and tinkling waterfalls, added charms inexpressible to the scene.

Availing myself of the permission granted, I passed the threshold. Instantly a sudden change took place in my whole frame. If a butterfly could describe its sensations when, first springing from the dark aurelia, it flutters and soars a gorgeous winged gem over the flowers at whose

root it had just crawled a loathsome worm, I might adopt its language to express my feelings at the moment I set my foot within THE MUSES' ELYSIUM. My soul was disencumbered of my body and floated through the air at the impulse of its will, without stay or hindrance. To see without eyes, to hear without ears, and to feel without touch, were exquisite delights; so exquisite, that to a disembodied spirit alone could they be pleasurable. Such heightened sensations, if associated with material organs, would have produced "death of a rose in aromatic pain," but to the extensile and ethereal spirit, they were only a source of pure gratification.

But it is in vain to attempt to describe the indescribable. Language is inadequate to convey my movements in that state; for to say that I moved or walked implies organic action, incompatible with my then state of being. But it would require too much circumlocution to adopt other phraseology.

Having advanced down the vista of trees, I beheld, on emerging from the leafy shade, a beautiful lake, fed by a glistening river, which bounded in a foaming cascade, over a natural barrier into the bosom of the still water, disturbing its peacefulness, and imparting life and motion to its natural calmness. The calm lake was "still as the slumbers of a saint forgiven;" the cataract disturbed its surface as passing doubts and fears will ruffle the placid trustfulness of the most faithful and holy mind, yet serve only to strengthen its faith and make more manifest its "beauty of holiness."

Between the spot where I was standing and the lake was a verdant plain, studded with trees and copses, diversified by garden-land and shrubberies, and intersected in various directions by winding walks and scarcely defined paths. A similar landscape sloped down to the water on its further side. In divers attitudes of repose and activity were numerous groups of persons; some in conversation, some amusing themselves with athletic games; while occasionally from openings in the copses, or wandering up some unfrequented path, appeared single individuals, reading, or wrapt in contemplative thought.

I was now amongst the favoured inhabitants of THE MUSES' ELYSIUM, where all who have done homage to the Muse on earth, are rewarded after death by conference with congenial minds. Here, thought I, the wandering spirit, while abiding its day of final doom, is permitted

to find temporary sojourn; provided it has duly qualified itself during life by a meritorious devotion to the Muse.

My attention was speedily fixed by an hilarious group of persons who were firing and receiving shots of wit with rapidity and force sufficient to sink any craft of less burden than their own.*

Anxious to join such excellent company, I addressed them; but to my disappointment, found that I was not yet qualified to partake in the happiness and enjoyments of this place. I was invisible and inaudible to the Elysians. This deprived me, indeed, of the pleasure of mutual converse, but it emboldened me to listen without fear of my presence interrupting the assembly, part of whose conversation I will endeavour to recall.

SCENE.—THE MUSES' ELYSIUM.

Time.—EVENING.

[Persons—SHAKSPERE, SPENSER, B. JONSON, DRAYTON, DRUMMOND.—CHAUCER *in the distance, apparently in deep contemplation.*]

Drum.—Yonder is "Dan Geoffrey," doing his daily service to the Daisy.

Dray.—'Tis strange so humble a flower should so absorb him.

Spens.—Without doubt he finds some deep "cloudie" meaning in that lowly flower, and sees matter which to our thoughts is unrevealed.

Shaks.—Methinks he recalls in its constancy and daily decoration of its mother earth in Spring and Autumn, Summer and Winter, the remembrance of some steadfast friend, whose memory he still delights to honour: nay, perhaps it is the only friendly face which never turned away when all human countenances were averted, and so in it he honours true friendship.

B. Jon.—I'll wager a cup of Canary that he takes it for a lady fair—Dan was their servant at sixty; and by my troth, love 's a malady not easily cured where it strikes deep.

---

* "Many were the wit-combats betwixt Shakspere and Ben Jonson, which two I behold like a Spanish great galleon and an English man-of-war: Master Jonson, like the former, was built far higher in learning; solid, but slow in his performances. Shakspere, with the English man-of-war, lesser in bulk, but lighter in sailing, could turn with all tides, tack about, and take advantage of all winds, by the quickness of his wit and invention."—FULLER'S WORTHIES.

Shaks.—I tell thee, Ben, Chaucer is no writer of sonnets to a mistress's eye brow—your guess is nought.

B. Jon.—Will you take my wager?

Shaks.—'Twill be but to swill to your folly at your own charges.

B. Jon.—I give you back your words, and will swill (three pottle deep) to *your* folly at *your* own charges, if you encounter me.

Shaks.—Have at you man. When we have drained the bowl, we'll not ask who pays.

B. Jon.—Nay, but the drawer will.

Shaks.—Not so; the drawer will ask first, lest he have you for a reckoner, and when his liquor's gone, find you not a ready one.

B. Jon.—A silly joke! But I care not—he'll not reckon with me.

Spens.—To the proof. Dan is coming hither; let's accost him and learn his deep meaning.

Drum.—Your brain so swells with allegory, that you would set all others seething with the like.

Spens.—Chaucer himself wrote cloudier matter, than pen of mine ere noted.

Shaks.—Ay, in his youth—wiser at sixty, he turned to nature and plain fact, and found more poetry there, than in the fancy's fondest fictions.

[Chaucer *advances.*]

B. Jon.—Ah Dan! thou com'st in time to save us witlings falling by the ears. Lend us one of thine to save ours, and listen to our thoughts.

Chau.—I will gladly save thee, and thee, and all of thee an ear-pulling, if I can. Take both mine—so that ye stick them not in the pillory. How can I serve ye?

Shaks.—We have referred to your decision, what you alone can decide—but Drummond shall speak for us.

B. Jon.—Hold! I'll not have Drummond. I like the man, but he likes not me. A late arrived ghost says he noted ill of me when I footed to his barren hills to salute him.

Drum.—A man may write his private thoughts for his private use. Blame fall on the fools who gave to the world what was written for the closet.

B. Jon.—What we note for ourselves, we note truly; what for the world, may or may not be our true thoughts. You do but the more prove your ill opinion.

Drum.—Yet is not ill opinion, ill will. I bear thee no malice. Nay, I love thee well. It is a friend's office to see a friend's faults. Whom we love not, we note not.

B. Jon.—A true friend sees no faults, still less finds them where they are not. I'll not have Drummond for spokesman, that's flat.

Chau.—I go, fare ye well! if I find you with sound heads and cool brains when I return, I'll talk to you. [*Going.*]

Spens.—And I go with you. I like not such tumult. [*Going.*]

Shaks.—Nay, prithee stay—here's Drayton; he'll tell our tale.

B. Jon.—Let Drayton speak.

Dray.—These worthies fain would know—and each has pledged his stakes on your answer—wherefore the venerable Chaucer daily does service to the humble Daisy? Shakspere opines, that it is in honour of a friend constant as itself; or thinks, mayhap, it is itself that only constant friend; while Jonson swears roundly, it is some lady's face that shines in its pearly circlet.

Chau.—And on my answer, what the stake?

Dray.—A cup of Canary.

Chau.—You do me wrong. 'Tis an unworthy task you put upon me. I will not tell my thoughts to rule a drunken bout.

Shaks.—Nay, take it in good part; 'tis Jonson's bet. He knows no worthier pledge and does you honour with his best; and I, who fain would know your meanest thought, did take his wage. Believe me we meant it in all love and honour.

Chau.—My son, I do believe you, and crave pardon for my haste. Forego the bet and I will answer you.

Shaks.—'Tis done.

B. Jon.—Be it so; for I would gladly hear your reason, though I lose my Canary.

Chau.—Console yourself that such loss is a gain; had your wage depended you would have paid forfeit. Shakspere nearer hits the mark than you;—I do love the Daisy for its constancy. When my honoured protector "old John of Gaunt, time-honour'd Lancaster" (I thank you [*to Shaks.*] for the worthy phrase), was no longer able to protect me; when friends, whom I had supported in their trouble, ungratefully abandoned me in mine,* and, in solitude and wretchedness, I wearily wasted away my best days, I turned to look somewhere for comfort and consolation; but I saw none but averted faces

* When Chaucer fled to Hainault to escape persecution for his Wicliffite opinions, he maintained some of his countrymen who had fled thither upon the same account, by sharing the money he had brought with him—an act of liberality which soon exhausted his stock. In the mean time, the partizans of his cause made their peace, not only without endeavouring to procure a pardon for him, but without aiding him in his exile, where he became greatly distressed for want of pecuniary supplies; and being compelled to return to England to see after his affairs, he was arrested and imprisoned in the Tower.

among a time-serving crowd, and casting daily my aching eyes on the earth, I daily beheld, sweetly smiling with a cheerful hopeful aspect, the pearly Daisy; it seemed to whisper hope, and to say, "See I smile through summer's sun and winter's storm, of each regardless; be not puffed up by prosperity, nor cast down by adversity." From the hour that I read this advice in its looks I have loved and honoured it as the only constant and true friend, ready by example, rather than by captious words or affected reproof, to avert melancholy, and inspire energy and hope.

Therefore, my son [*to Shaks.*], you, who above all others have read the human mind truly and deeply, have guessed my thoughts aright; now let me aim at yours. You loved the Violet because in it you saw a congenial lover of retirement whose odour yet ascended and told the passenger that a hidden sweetness lurked among the leaves.

Shaks.—'Tis true; I did love the Violet for its love of a not useless retirement. I saw how, unseen and unnoticed, it afforded gratification and pleasure to the air around it, and thus learnt to make seclusion from the bustling world useful and gratifying to it.*

Spens.—And yet methinks the bustling world is most fitting for the active mind. I never much loved the retirement you admire.

Drum.—You did not fairly try it.

Shaks.—No; the barbarous horrors of wild Irish life ill supplied the calm abode and quiet scenes in which the sons of the Muse delight. Moreover the gay pleasures of the court of our princely Queen were an ill preparative for the trials of seclusion.

Spens.—'Tis too true. The horrors of that life are ever engraven on the heart of a bereaved parent. Who can forget that he saw his home made the funeral pile of his child?†

Drum.—Let's leave these thoughts which savour too much of earth. Come—let those who will, pluck from this shady bank a Violet for Shakspere, and those who do affect with Chaucer the Daisy, let them choose one from yon open launde.—I pluck a Violet.

Dray.—And I a Daisy.

Spens.—And I a Violet; how Ben, what sayst thou?

B. Jon.—An I break my back stooping to such foolery, I 'll wear ass's

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* At the early age of forty-eight, Shakspere retired to Stratford to spend the remainder of his days; but still continued to issue, for the admiration and delight of all ages, some of the finest of his dramas.

† During the rebellion of the Earl of Desmond, in 1597, Spenser's castle at Kilcolman, in Ireland, was burnt to the ground, and one of his children perished in the flames.

ears the rest o' my days and like Midas be a listener and noter down of other men's follies. Drummond does well not to pluck a Daisy, 'twould become a stinging-nettle in his hands to see true friendship so abused.

Drum.—You wrong me by my faith. Come join our silly sport and fool it with us.

B. Jon.—I'll none of it.—There's no flower to my thought like Sweet Sops-in-wine—it sounds of the wassail and the bowl—the only true friend, if so be you use him gently; ride not a willing horse too hard lest he kick and throw you; stick to my "LEGES CONVIVIALES," and no man need fear a fall.*

Here a pause occurred in the conversation, and my attention was arrested by two individuals reclining on a bank, purple with Violets, amidst which Primroses peeped out like stars in the blue firmament.

The similarity of their countenances told me that they were brothers. When I had neared them, I perceived in the amiability and piety of their thoughts, and the mutual cordiality of their manners that I was looking upon the brothers Phineas and Giles Fletcher. The former was plucking the Primroses and pulling them to pieces, explaining to his brother the uses of their various parts; to which Giles responded by praises of their beauty, and of the wisdom and goodness of the Deity who had perfected the meanest herb which grows.

Being desirous to take part in their conversation, and learn somewhat of the more serious thoughts and occupations of the Elysians, I addressed myself to them, forgetting that to their senses I was invisible and inaudible. Vexed at my inability to arouse their notice, and provoked at their imperturbability, I made a final effort to make myself heard;—the effort broke the charm—my dream had vanished; and cold and shivering, I was glad to retire to my dormitory.

My lengthened nap had interfered with my usual rest, and my mind, excited by the remembrance of the dream, refused to allow me further repose. I lay thinking on what I had seen and heard in the land of dreams; and, joining in the interest of the choices of Chaucer and

* B. Jonson wrote laws for the regulation of his club, held in the Apollo of the Old Devil Tavern; in which he sanctions only moderation in wine. The following are laws xi. and xii.:—

"Moderatis poculis provocare sodales fas esto.
At fabulis magis quam vino velitatio fiat."

Shakspere, I felt anxious to ascertain to which of the flowers favoured by them the most suffrages had been given by the great body of their brother Poets.

I determined, therefore, at the first leisure opportunity, to collect the various passages in which the Poets had celebrated the Daisy and the Violet. In the task I met with many other flowers which claimed a right to be called "the poets' favourites." These, too, I collected; and finally, the result was the nucleus of the present work; which I was subsequently induced to extend, in hopes that my labours might be subservient to the pleasure of others.

Division E.

1380 to 1570.

"Thou know'st the sweetness by antique song,
Breathed o'er the names of that flowery throng;
The Woodbine, the Primrose, the Violet dim,
The Lily that gleams by the fountain's brim;
These are old words that have made each grove
A dreaming haunt for romance and love."

MRS. HEMANS.

In our wanderings through the Poets' Flower Garden, it will greatly enhance our appreciation of its beauties if we proceed with some degree of system; and, examining each border separately, consider it with reference to its cultivators and the period in which it was laid out. The metaphor here used is the more just and suitable, because at the close of our ramble, we shall not fail to be struck with the resemblance which the Poets' Garden bears to the system of horticulture, peculiar to the period in which the productions of Flora were described. Thus in the earliest period of English poetry, the garden was little attended to, its exotic productions were few, and those few confined to the demesne of the monarch, the pleasaunce of the princely baron, or the garden of the lordly priest. To these scenes of peace and pleasantness, in the midst of a world of strife and bloodshed, wild Nature's "cultureless buds" were often transferred; some being esteemed for their beauty, some for their perfume, and others for their medicinal or healing virtues. These gave to the garden of our early ancestors a

half-wild aspect: there flourished the trained woodbine around the arbour formed of eglantine;

"Many a thousand Daisie red as rose
And white also,"

of colours varied by the hand of cultivation, sprang amidst double Violets, and divers-coloured Primroses; while limes and alders, elms and oaks, lent the shade necessary to protect the tender flowers from the heat of the sun, or the blasts of winter. Of gardens so planted with Nature's untainted works, and so protected by our native trees, GEOFFREY CHAUCER furnishes several illustrations:—

"The soil was plainé, smooth, and wonder soft
All overspread with *tapettes that Nature*
Had made herself: covered eke aloft
With boughès green, the flowers for to cure,
That in their beauty they may long endure
From all assault of Phœbus, fervent fere,
Which in his sphere so hote shone and clere."

In another of his works he gives a beautiful description of a garden, just recovering from the poverty of winter:—

"A flowry green
Full thick of grasse, full soft and sweet,
With floures fele faire under feet,
And little used, it seemed thus;
For both Flora and Zephyrus,
They two, that make floures grow,
Had made their dwelling there I trow;
For it was one to behold,
As though the earth envy wold
To be gayer than the heaven,
To have mo' floures such seven,
As in the welkin starès be.
It had forgot the poverty
That winter, through his cold morrowes,
Had made it suffer, and his sorrowes,
All was forgotten, and that was seen,
For all the wood was woxen green;
Sweetness of dewe had made it wax."

The striking characteristic of Chaucer's descriptions of flowers, is the intense warmth of feeling with which he seems to regard them. We can hardly realize to ourselves an old man of sixty years of age, entering so deeply into the beauties of a garden, as he appears to do, in the following lines; notwithstanding that they exhibit the truth, which youth indeed is unwilling to admit, but which experienced age knows but too well, that no external pleasures can wholly lighten the heart, if oppressed by great sickness or sorrow:—

"May had painted with his soft showers
This garden full of leavès and of flowres:
And craft of mannis hand so curiously
Arrayed had this garden trewely,
That never was there garden of such price,
But if it were the very Paradise.
The odour of flowres, and the freshè sight
Would have ymaked any heartè light
That ever was born, but if too great sickness,
Or too great sorrow held it in distress;
So full it was of beauty and pleasance."

See too how he revels and luxuriates in the "joly month of May!"

"And Zephyrus, and Flora gentelly,
Gave to the flowres soft and tenderly,
Their sweet breath, and made them for to spread,
As god and goddess of the flowry mead;
I' which me thought I mightè day by day,
Dwellen alway, the joly month of May,
Withouten sleep, withouten meat or drink."

From John Skelton's little canzonet, we learn that the ancient fashion of praising a mistress under the semblance of a flower was not obsolete in his day:—

"She is the Violet,
The Daisy delectable,
The Columbine commendable,
This Jelofer amiable,
This most goodly flowre,

This blossom of fresh colour,
So Jupiter me succour,
She florysheth new and new
In beauty and vertue."

James I. in like manner celebrates his mistress as

"The flower Jonetts,"

(probably the Jonquil,) because of her name Janetta or Janet.

Chaucer furnished his successors with descriptions of spring, and lamentations for the forlorn condition in which winter had left the tender crops; but beyond these imitations we find nothing among English writers available to our pages, until the time of Surrey. If, therefore, between the death of Chaucer and the Spenserian age, we would find any original descriptions of flowers, we must seek them among the poets of the North, which witnessed the birth of a Dunbar and a Douglas, while England's Muse was almost silent.

William Dunbar thus graphically represents the flowery May:—

"In bed at morrow, sleeping as I lay;
* * * * *
Methought fresh May before my bed up stood,
In weed depaint of many diverse hue,
Sober, benign, and full of mansuetude,
In bright attire of flowers forged new,
Heavenly of colour, white, red, brown, and blue,
Balmèd in dew, and gilt with Phœbus' beamès,
While all the house illumynit of her lemys."

Gawin Douglas likewise, like all the early poets, celebrates the season of May:—

"In May I raise to do my observance,
And enterèd in a garden of pleasance,
With Sol depaint, as Paradise amiable
And blissful boughès with bloomed varyance.
So craftily Dame Flora had overfret
Her heavenly bed, powdered with many a set
Of ruby, topas, pearl, and emerant,
With balmy dew, bathed and kindly wet."

Douglas gives a general and particular description of various flowers, which may well find a place here, though somewhat modernized in orthography, without which it would not be easily understood:—

"The blooming hawthorn clad his prickles all;
Full of fresh sproutings the wine-grapes young,
Along the trellis did on twistis hang;
The peeping buttons on the budded trees
Overspreading leaves of Nature's tapestries;
Soft grassy verdure, after balmy showers,
On curling stalks smiling to their flowers,
Beholding them so many divers hue;
Some azure, some pale, some brownish, and some blue,
Some grey, some gules, some purple, some sanguine,
Blanched or brown, reddish yellow many one,
Some heavenly coloured in celestial grey,
Some wat'ry hewèd as the high wavy sea,
And some depaint in freckles red and white,
Some bright as gold with aureate leaves of light.
The daisy did unbraid her crownal small,
And every flower unlappèd in the dale;
In battle-bearing blossoms, the thistle wild,
The clover, trefoil, and the camomilde,
The flour-de-luce forth spread his heavenly hue;
Rose damask and columbine black and blue;
Sere downies small on dande-lion sprang
The young green bloomed strawberry leaves among;
Gay gilliflowers thereon leavis unshut;
Fresh primrose and the purple violet;
The rose buds putting forth their head
'Gan burst and kiss their vermeil lippis red;
Curled scarlet leaves, some shedding both at once,
Raised fragrant smell a'midst from golden grains;
Heavenly lilies with curling toppis white,
Opened and shew their crestis redemyte,
The balmy vapour from their silken crops
Distilling wholesome sugared honey-drops;
And silver dew-drops 'gan from leavis hang,
With crystal spangles on the verdure young;
* * * * * *
So that each blossom, scion, herb, or flower
Wax'd all embalmed of the fresh liquor."

Of the amatory poets of the reign of Henry VIII., Sir Thomas Wyatt the elder, and the Earl of Surrey alone survive; but the former was in his poetry merely a lover, and had scarcely a thought beyond a lover's hopes and fears. The Earl of Surrey's inclinations also led him to adore the blaze of courtly beauty, yet he did not wholly forget the sweet season of spring: and when he contrasts its annual return with his own hopeless state as a lover, he does not omit (like later poets) to place flowers among the appropriate images of its recurrence:—

"The sweet season that bud and bloom forth brings,
With green hath clad the hill, and eke the vale;
The nightingale with feathers new she sings;
The turtle to her mate hath told her tale:
Summer is come, for every spray now springs;
The hart hath hung his old head on the pale;
The buck in brake his winter coat he flings;
The fishes flete with new-repaired scale;
The adder all her slough away she flings;
The swift swallow pursueth the flies small;
The busy bee her honey now she mynges;
Winter is worne that was the flowers' bale—
And thus I see among these pleasant things,
Each care decays, and yet my sorrow springs"

Thomas Sackville Lord Buckhurst stands intermediate between Surrey and Spenser. As a poet, he belongs rather to the reign of Mary than Elizabeth. His description of a winter's evening displays great accuracy of detail, and his regret "to see the summer flowers forlorn by winter's blasts," evinces that it is possible to combine a close and attentive study of the passions of the heart, with a keen sense of the beauties of Nature:

"The wrathful Winter 'proaching on a pace,
With blustring blasts had all ybared the treen,
And old Saturnus, with his frosty face,
With chilling cold had pierced the tender green:
The mantels rent wherein enwrapped been
The gladsome groves that now lay overthrown,
The tapets torn, and every bloom down blown.

The soil that erst so seemly was to seen,
  Was all despoiled of her beauty's hue:
And sweet fresh flowers (wherewith the Summer's queen
  Had clad the earth) now Boreas' blasts down blew;
  And small fowls flocking, in their song did rue
The Winter's wrath, wherewith each thing defaced
In woful wise bewailed the Summer past.

* * * *

And sorrowing I to see the Summer flowers,
  The lively green, the lusty leas forlorn,
The sturdy trees so shattered with the showers,
  The fields so fade that flourish'd so beforne—
  It taught me well all earthly things be born
To dye the death, for nought long time may last;
The Summer's beauty yields to Winter's blast."

Division II.

1570 to 1640.

"Who now a posie pins not in his cap,
And not a garland baldrick-wise doth wear?
Some, of such flowers as to his hand doth hap;
Others, such as a secret meaning bear."

DRAYTON.

The poetry of this period is particularly rich in descriptions of the country and allusions to flowers. Nor are these mere poetical imaginings; on the contrary, they bear the stamp and impress of actual observation under the open canopy of heaven; they are evidently studies from Nature, and silently conjure up to the mind some almost forgotten spot, some

"Bank whereon the wild thyme grows,"

or where the primrose shines out from amidst a firmament of violets. These descriptions, too, however often repeated, have all the novelty and freshness of Nature. We should as soon tire of the recurrence of spring, a garden of roses, or the landscape of a Claude, as of the brilliant etchings and vignettes from Nature, with which the poetry of this period is so beautifully illuminated and adorned.

The peculiarity which strikes the reader in the floral poetry of this period, is the immense profusion of flowers which are chronicled in a single page, and the accurate epithets by which they are concisely described. In this respect, it resembles the mixed border of a garden,

where flowers of every variety of colour, form, and size are mingled in gorgeous confusion; and the beauty of which consists in masses of colour judiciously disposed, rather than in the distinct loveliness or perfection of its individual plants.

The descriptions of garlands, bauldricks, anadems, and crowns of flowers, each of which had its distinctive use, carry us back to a time when the mystery of weaving them was understood, and when it was considered no shame to waste the hours under the greenwood tree, or in plucking materials to crown a May queen.

The earlier poets scattered flowers amongst their poetry, as Nature herself does in the open field; sometimes singly, sometimes in masses; but always so as to form a *part* only of the beauty of the scene. Even as in the wilds of Nature, no spot blooms without a flower or "weed of glorious feature;" so, in the descriptions of such scenes, the poets who had studied Nature, never omitted to introduce her favourite decorations. On the other hand, as Nature never plants flowers but as adjuncts to other beauties, so those poets never pluck and place them as it were in a "flower-holder" for exclusive delight. It is not until the latter part of this period, when a more metaphysical style of thought was beginning to supersede the unsophisticated love of Nature which signalizes the earlier poets, that any entire pieces addressed to flowers are met with. Donne, who has been classed as the first of the metaphysical school of poets, and Herrick, whose strong attachment to country life was considerably affected by the style of the period, are the first poets who dedicated distinct verses to individual flowers. Donne's lines "To the Primrose," and "To Blossoms," cannot boast of much beauty; but Herrick's "To the Primrose" and other flowers, have never been surpassed in sweetness and refined delicacy of sentiment. Mournful as is their general character, it is that happy sadness which imparts pleasure, and on which the well organized mind fears not, nay, rather feels it a duty, occasionally to dwell.

Commencing this period with the works of Edmund Spenser, we soon perceive that he was a very close and accurate observer of flowers; for his felicitous epithets evince an intimate acquaintance with their habits and properties. Luxuriating in metaphor, he terms flowers "the Fields' Honour" and "the Children of the Spring;" and his intense love for them is strongly manifested in the pretty episode of "Muiopotmos,

or the Fate of the Butterfly," whose flower-sipping propensities he rapturously envies :—

" What more felicitie can fall to creature,
  Than to enjoy delight with liberty,
And to be lord of all the works of Nature,
  To reign in the air from earth to highest sky,
To feed on flowers and weeds of glorious feature,
  To take whatever thing doth please the eye?
Who rests not pleased with such happiness,
Well worthy he to taste of wretchedness."

Spenser has several allegorical personations of Spring, of whom flowers are appropriately made the distinguishing costume :—

" Fresh Spring, the herald of love's mightie king,
  In whose coat armour richly are displayed
All sorts of flowers the which on earth do spring,
  In goodly colours gloriously array'd."

And again—

" Lusty Spring, all dight in leaves of floures,
  That freshly budded and new bloosmes did bear
(In which a thousand birds had built their boures
That sweetly sung, to call forth paramours) :
  And in his hand a javelin he did bear,
And on his head (as fit for warlike stoures)
  A gilt engraven morion he did wear ;
  That as some did him love, so others did him fear."

In the following lines we have a striking example of that felicity in bestowing epithets, which, as we have said, proclaims Spenser's intimate acquaintance with the character, habits, and properties of the individuals of the floral kingdom :—

" The rose engrained in pure scarlet die,
  The lilly fresh, and violet belowe,
The marigold, and cheerful rosemarie,
  The Spartan myrtle, whence sweet gum does flowe,
The purple hyacinth, and fresh costmarie,
  And saffron sought for in Cilician soil,
  And laurell th' ornament of Phœbus' toil.

"Fresh rhododaphne, and the Sabine floure
Matching the wealth of th' ancient frankincence,
And pallid ivie building his own boure,
And box yet mindful of his old offence,
Red amaranthus, lucklesse paramour,
Ox eye still green, and bitter patience;
Ne wants there pale narcisse, that in a well
Seeing his beautie, in love with it fell."

Henry Constable furnishes the first specimen of a style of amatory verse, which, a century after, became the staple of which all floral poetry was composed:—

"My lady's presence makes the roses red,
Because to see her lips they blush for shame;
The lilies' leaves (for envy) pale became,
And her white hands in them this envy bred.
The marigold the leaves abroad doth spread,
Because the sun's, and her power is the same;
The violet of purple colour came,
Dy'd in the blood she made my heart to shed.
In brief, all flowers from her their virtue take;
From her sweet breath, their sweet smells do proceed;
The living heat which her eyebeams do make,
Warmeth the ground, and quickeneth the seed;
The rain wherewith she watereth the flowers,
Falls from mine eyes, which she dissolves in showers."

William Shakspere. Often as Shakspere avails himself of flowers as illustrations, he comparatively seldom uses the generic term, flower. He was sufficiently well acquainted with their habits, to apply them specifically. Most other writers when using them as metaphors or similes, hide their limited knowledge in vague generalities, lest the illustration should fail; while the generic term "flower" will safely apply, and it is hard if the reader cannot find some one which will bear out the intended meaning. Shakspere's profound knowledge of Nature, relieves us from the necessity of adducing many extracts in this place, and the principal of his floral passages will be found in the subsequent chapters on individual flowers.

In several instances he alludes to the pious and lovely custom of strewing the graves of departed friends with flowers. Even were the

custom [illegible] beautiful and poetical in itself, his language would make it so, and be alone sufficient to induce and sanction its revival.

Arviragus :—

"With fairest flowers,
Whilst summer lasts, and I live here, Fidele,
I'll sweeten thy sad grave. Thou shalt not lack
The flower that's like thy face, pale primrose; nor
The azured hare-bell, like thy veins; no, nor
The leaf of eglantine, whom not to slander,
Out-sweeten'd not thy breath:—the ruddock would,
With charitable bill (O bill, sore-shaming
Those rich-left heirs that let their fathers lie
Without a monument!) bring thee all this;
Yea, and furr'd moss besides, when flowers are none,
To winter-ground thy corse."

Belarius :—

"Here's a few flowers; but about midnight, more:
The herbs that have on them cold dew o' the night
Are strewings fitt'st for graves.—Upon their faces:—
You were as flowers; now wither'd; even so
These herb'lets shall, which we upon you strow."

So likewise on the grave of the divinely-souled Ophelia:—

"Sweets to the sweet. Farewell!
I hop'd thou should'st have been my Hamlet's wife;
I thought thy bride-bed to have deck'd, sweet maid,
And not t' have strewed thy grave."

Shakspere does not condescend to the quaint fancies which gave rise to a Language of Flowers; instead of making them the vehicles of human passion, he with infinitely more propriety and judgment assigns them to the fairies, as a medium of correspondence in lieu of writing:—

"Fairies use flowers for *their* charactery."

What a vivid idea does this single line convey, both of the loveliness and etheriality of his fairies, and his appreciation of the delicacy and purity of flowers!

Michael Drayton furnishes many passages descriptive of flowers. One of the most beautiful and characteristic allegories in his voluminous Polyolbion, is the narrative of the marriage of the Tame and the Isis, whose respective decorative garlands he describes at great length. "In the garlands of the Tame (it is added in a note) are wreathed most of our English field-flowers: in those of Isis our more sweet, and those of the garden;" but as the greater part of these descriptions will be found interspersed in subsequent pages, we omit them here, and can only make room for two short extracts, displaying much delicacy of fancy. The first describes a bank, "rich with the enamelled bravery of the beauteous Spring:"—

"An easy bank near to this place there was,
A seat fair Flora used to sit upon,
Curling her clear locks, in this liquid glass,
Putting her rich gems and attirings on."

The second, a lover's wish, presents a beautiful contrast both to the brutal desire of Caligula, and the sensual one of Byron:— *

"Oh that the sweets of all the flowers that grow
The labouring air would gather into one,
In gardens, fields, nor meadows leaving none,
And all their sweetness upon thee would throw."

Ben Jonson, although born and resident nearly his whole life in London, was, like the best poets of his time, a lover of flowers; and dedicated one of his Masques to their goddess, under the title of "*Chloridia*," from Chloris, the Greek name of Flora.

The list of flowers, with which he describes the Shepherds directing the Nymphs to strew the ground on "Pan's Anniversary," is worthy the attention of the practical florist; it would almost furnish a moderate-sized garden:—

"Well done, my pretty ones, rain roses still,
Until the last be dropt: then hence; and fill
Your fragrant prickles for a second shower.
Bring corn-flag, tulips, and Adonis' flower,

* Caligula's wish that all mankind had but one head, that he might cut it off at one blow, is well known: no less so is Byron's, that all womankind had "one rosy mouth, and I might kiss it."

Fair ox-eye, goldy-locks, and columbine,
Pinks, goulands, king-cups, and sweet sops-in-wine,
Blue hare-bells, pagles, pansies, calaminth,
Flower-gentle, and the fair-hair'd hyacinth:
Bring rich carnations, flower-de-luces, lilies,
The chequed and purple-ringed daffodillies,
Bright crown imperial, kingspear, hollyhocks,
Sweet Venus-navel, and soft lady-smocks:
Bring, too, some branches forth of Daphne's hair,
And gladdest myrtle for these posts to wear,
With spikenard weaved and marjoram between,
And starr'd with yellow-gold and meadows-queen—
That when the altar, as it ought, is drest,
More odour come not from the Phœnix' nest;
The breath thereof Panchaia might envy,
The colours China, and the light the sky."

Richard Barnfield, like many of his contemporaries, chronicles various flowers:—

"There grows the gilliflowre, the mint, the daisy
Both red and white, the blue-vein'd violet;
The purple hyacinth, the spyke to please thee,
The scarlet dy'd carnation bleeding yet:
The sage, the savory, and sweet marjoram,
Hyssop, thyme, and eye-bright, good for the blind and dumb.

The pink, the primrose, cowslip, and daffodilly,
The harebell blue, the crimson columbine,
Sage, lettuce, parsley, and the milk-white lily,
The rose and speckled flower called sops-in-wine,
Fine pretty king-cups, and the yellow bootes,
That grows by rivers and by shallow brooks."

Phineas Fletcher quaintly describes various flowers:—

"The hedge, green satin pink'd and cut, arrays;
The heliotrope unto cloth of gold aspires;
In hundred-color'd silks the tulip plays;
Th' imperial flower, his neck with pearl attires;
The lily, high her silver grogram rears;
The pansy, her wrought velvet garment bears;
The red rose, scarlet, and the provence, damask wears."

His brother, GILES FLETCHER, has a curious description of a garden, in which the taste for strange devices of animals, temples, &c., cut in the trees, or figured in borders, which was then beginning to prevail, is exhibited :—

"The garden like a lady fair was cut,
That lay as if she slumber'd in delight,
And to the open skies her eyes did shut;
The azure fields of heaven were 'sembled right
In a large round, set with the flowers of light:
The flow'rs-de-luce, and the round sparks of dew,
That hung upon their azure leaves, did shew
Like twinkling stars, that sparkle in the evening blue.

Upon a hilly bank her head she cast,
On which the bower of vain-delight was built,
White and red roses for her face were plac'd,
And for her tresses marigolds were spilt;
Them broadly she display'd, like flaming gilt,
Till in the ocean the glad day were drown'd:
Then up again her yellow locks she wound,
And with green fillets in their pretty cauls them bound."

THOMAS CAREW, who was one of the earliest, as he was one of the best, of a tribe of amorous poets, abounding in indelicacies and frigid conceits, gives us the following characteristic specimen of his style :—

THE INQUIRY.

"Amongst the myrtles as I walk'd,
Love and my sighs thus intertalk'd:
'Tell me,' said I, in deep distress,
'Where I may find my shepherdess?'

'Thou fool,' said Love, 'knows't thou not this,
In every thing that's good she is?
In yonder tulip go and seek,
There thou may'st find her lip, her cheek:

'In yon enamel'd pansy by,
There thou shal't have her curious eye;
In bloom of peach, in rosy bud,
There wave the streamers of her blood.

'In brightest lilies that there stand,
The emblems of her whiter hand:
In yonder rising hill there smell
Such sweets as in her bosom dwell.'

''Tis true,' said I—and thereupon
I went to pluck them one by one,
To make of parts a union—
But on a sudden all was gone.

With that I stopt: said Love, 'These be,
Fond man, resemblances of thee:
And, as these flowers, thy joys shall die,
Ev'n in the twinkling of an eye:
And all thy hopes of her shall wither,
Like these short sweets thus knit together.'"

William Browne was a purely pastoral and descriptive poet. There is a simplicity and natural truthfulness in his descriptions of still life, which remind one of the pictures of Gainsborough. Browne wrote all his poetry in early youth, when the heart feels with warmth, and when "the least thing that grows"

"Can more infuse
Than all Nature's beauties can
In some other wiser man."

WITHER.

The wiser man—the child of this world—is blinded by his wisdom; he beholds Nature "through a glass darkly, and not face to face;" he would fain "unweave a rainbow;" and, unmindful of its beauty, or the awful sublimity of the event which the Bible teaches us to annex to its appearance, he delights to expatiate on its physical causes, and is learned on refraction of light. Browne's poetry abounds in flowers, and he gives a more copious account of their "Language" than any other poet. This language—lately revived, and alleged to be derived from the East—was quite as familiar to our rural ancestors, as it is to the beauty of the harem; and the study of our old poets would furnish as good a dictionary to the language, as a knowledge of the Eastern interpretations. Browne's explanations of the meanings of flowers will be

found scattered through subsequent pages: but we may introduce here a manciful and elegant description of a bouquet:—

"As in a rainbow's many color'd hue,
Here see we watchet* deepen'd with a blue,
There a dark tawny with a purple mix'd,
Yellow and flame, with streaks of green betwixt,
A bloody stream into a blushing run,
And ends still with the colour which begun,
Drawing the deeper to a lighter stain,
Bringing the lightest to the deep'st again;
With such rare art each mingleth with his fellow,
The blue with watchet, green and red with yellow;
Like to the changes which we daily see
Around the dove's neck with variety,
Where none can say (though he it strict attends)
Here one begins, and there the other ends:
So did the maidens with their various flowers
Deck up their windows and make neat their bowers;
Using such cunning as they did dispose
The ruddy pi'ny with the lighter rose,
The monkshood with the bugloss, and entwine
The white, the blue, the flesh-like columbine
With pinks, sweet-williams; that far off the eye
Could not the manner of their mixtures spy."

No poet gives such free reins to his imagination, when on the subject of flowers, as Robert Herrick, who, in "the argument of his book," tells us:

"I sing of brooks, of blossoms, birds and bowers,
Of April, May, of June, and July-flowers;
I sing of May-poles, hock-carts, wassails, wakes,
Of bridegrooms, brides, and of their bridal cakes.
* * * * * *
I sing of times trans-shifting; and I write
How roses first came red, and lilies white."

Beautiful as are many of his well-known songs on flowers, he has too many in the following strain:—

* Light blue.

WHY FLOWERS CHANGE COLOUR.

"These fresh beauties we can prove
Once were virgins sick of love.
Turn'd to flowers, still in some
Colours go and colours come."

From HENRY PEACHAM we select a stanza, the character of which, being more in accordance with the style of the early Elizabethan poets than of those of the next period, induces us to place it here; as the dates of his birth and writings are matters of dispute among the learned:—

"Nor princes' richest arras may compare
With some small spot where Nature's skill is shown,
Perfuming sweetly all the neighbour air,
While thousand colours in a night are blown:
Here's a light crimson; there a deeper one;
A maiden's blush; here purples; there a white;
Then all commingled for our more delight."

GEORGE HERBERT, a religious poet, who has not yet lost his popularity, gathers the usual instruction from flowers:—

LIFE.

"I made a posy, while the day ran by:
Here will I smell my remnant out, and tie
My life within this band.
But time did beckon to the flowers, and they
By noon most cunningly did steal away,
And wither'd in my hand.

My hand was next to them, and then my heart;
I took, without more thinking, in good part
Time's gentle admonition:
Who did so sweetly death's sad taste convey,
Making my mind to smell my fatal day;
Yet sug'ring the suspicion.

Farewell, dear flowers, sweetly your time ye spent,
Fit, while ye lived, for smell or ornament,
And, after death, for cures.
I follow straight without complaint or grief;
Since, if my scent be good, I care not if
It be as short as yours."

Division III.

1640 to 1725.

"Where Nature has to Art resign'd,
Till all looks mean, stiff, and confin'd."

ALLAN RAMSAY.

MILTON.

"Thy soul was like a star, and dwelt apart;
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea,
Pure as the naked heavens—majestic, free."

WORDSWORTH.

We search in vain, in the great majority of the poets of this period, for any heartfelt descriptions of Nature's works; indeed, they seem almost excluded: and if to this absence is added the neglect into which the writers of the previous period fell, it must be inferred that external Nature was not considered to yield fit subjects for the Muse. Hence Floral Poetry languished; and poor and worthless are the few instances in which flowers are introduced. Sometimes we are favoured with lines expatiating on the flowers of a lady's embroidery, or even of her carpet, as outvying Flora's best productions: or we are told that, save in her presence, the flowers neglect to grow, or yield perfume. But the favourite subject is a "Rose-bud in a lady's bosom;" and the fair one is reminded of the fleetness of beauty by the brief existence of the flower—a stale idea, which is repeated and harped upon *ad nauseam*.

Cowley's "Ode on Solitude,"—which has found admirers in our own day, and has been selected by his eulogist, Campbell, as a specimen of his beauties—is so apt an example of the contempt in which Nature's works were held, that we cannot do better than quote a part of it. It will be noticed how Cowley labours to *denaturalize* natural scenery, and racks his invention to convert the beauties of the wood into the appurtenances of a city:—

"Hail, old *Patrician* trees, *so great and good!*
Hail ye *Plebeian* underwood!
Where the *poetic* birds rejoice,
And for their quiet nests and plenteous food
Pay with their grateful voice.
Hail the pure Muses' richest *manor seat!*
* * * * *
Here Nature does for me a *house* erect,
Nature, the fairest *architect*,
Who those fond artists does despise
That can the fair and living trees neglect,
Yet the dead timber prize.
* * * * *
Here the soft winds above me flying,
With all their wanton boughs *dispute.*
* * * * *
A *silver* stream shall roll his waters near,
Gilt with the sunbeams *here and there.*"

Now what can be more absurd, in a description of a secluded wood, than to designate the trees patricians, and the underwoods plebeians; to degrade the birds into poets, earning a precarious food by their songs, while the wood itself is converted into a house; Nature into a bricklayer; the winds into scholastic disputants; and the stream into silver, gilt "here and there," like a parcel-gilt goblet?

In fact, the solitude, which Cowley pretended to eulogize, was possessed, yet hated by him. Dwelling in the country, he despised its pursuits, sighed for the occupations of the town, and was alive to no beauty save in the streets of the capital. Faint indeed must have been his appreciation of the uses and enjoyments of rural life, when he considered his residence in the country as equivalent to death and burial, and wrote "An Epitaph upon

himself yet alive, but withdrawn from the busy world to a country life, to be supposed written on his house."

Even his admiration of the flowers of "the Garden," springs not from a sense of their intrinsic beauty, but only from their contrast to the dirt and smoke of the city. Had he really loved the productions of the garden, he would have contrasted them with the choicest pleasures, and not with the annoyances of the "populous town:"—

> "Who, that has reason and his smell,
> Would not among roses and jasmine dwell,
> Rather than all his spirits choke
> With exhalations of dirt and smoke,
> And all th' uncleanness which does drown,
> In pestilential clouds, a populous town?"

Cowley was admired, beloved, and imitated more than any other poet, until the time of Pope; and when the master of the school set the example of degrading Nature and her works, what can we require from the pupils? What can we expect from the age which crowned Cowley as its master spirit, and so disregarded Milton, as to leave it matter for discussion whether or not his sublime genius were in any degree appreciated? We cannot say, therefore, that disappointment is the lot of him who searches the poetry of this period for natural beauties, for he has the portion of the blessed who expecteth nothing; and the reader will at once understand why our selections from "the Augustan age" of poetry are so few, and those few so poor. Cowley, Dryden, Swift, and other contemporary names of notoriety, were like the thorny ground on which the seed fell, and was choked when the thorns sprung up. The exposition of the parable equally applies here, for those thorns were "the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches," whose baneful influence prostituted the Muse, and made her the vehicle of the most servile adulation, and the most debasing obscenity. The poetry of the period consisted almost exclusively of flattering addresses, and disgusting satires; occasionally varied by Pastorals, redolent of every thing but pastoral life, and consisting of Dialogues between Delia and Corydon, Thyrsis and Chloe, lauding, abusing, and lamenting their loves, with an oft-repeated allusion to "sheep"—the only natural objects which appear to have been thought necessary to constitute "Pastorals."

Edmund Waller was celebrated for the smoothness of his verse. The following plea of a lover for inconstancy is a pretty sample of that quality :—

"Sweetest! you know, the sweetest of things
Of various flowers the bees compose;
Yet no particular taste it brings
Of violet, woodbine, pink, or rose:
So love the result is of all the graces
Which flow from a thousand several faces."

Andrew Marvell, though little known as a poet, deserves to be classed with his friend Milton, rather than with the herd of "wits of either Charles's days;" and we are glad to have an opportunity of selecting from his poems a description of a "Dial of Flowers," which it would appear, he had seen actually constructed long before Linnæus propounded the same idea:—

"How well the skilful gard'ner drew
Of flowers and herbs this dial new!
Where, from above, the milder sun
Does through a fragrant zodiac run;
And, as it works, th' industrious bee
Computes its time as well as we.
How could such sweet and wholesome hours
Be reckon'd, but with herbs and flowers?"

As an illustration of the most usual mode of introducing flowers into the poetry of this period, we give the following lines of Thomas Tickell, instead of wearying the reader's patience with some score of similar mediocre verses:—

TO A LADY WITH A PRESENT OF FLOWERS.

"The fragrant painting of our flowery fields,
The choicest stores that youthful Summer yields,
Strephon to fair Eliza hath convey'd,
The sweetest garland to the sweetest maid.
O cheer the flowers, my fair, and let them rest
On the Elysium of thy snowy breast,

And there regale the smell, and charm the view,
With richer odours, and a lovelier hue!
Learn hence, nor fear a flatterer in the flower,
Thy form divine, and beauty's matchless power;
Faint, near thy cheeks, the bright carnation glows,
And thy ripe lips out-blush the opening rose:
The lily's snow betrays less pure a light,
Lost in thy bosom's more unsullied white;
And wreaths of jasmine shed perfumes beneath
Th' ambrosial incense of thy balmy breath.

Ten thousand beauties grace the rival pair,
How fair the chaplet, and the nymph how fair!
But ah! too soon these fleeting charms decay,
The fading lustre of one hastening day,
This night shall see the gaudy wreath decline,
The roses wither, and the lilies pine.

The garland's fate to thee shall be applied,
And what advance thy form, shall check thy pride:
Be wise, my fair, the present hour improve,
Let joy be now, and now a waste of love;
Each drooping bloom shall plead thy just excuse,
And that which shew'd thy beauty, shew its use."

John Milton is one of those names which refuse to be placed in the same category with those with which they may happen to be associated in date, and demand to stand first in the rolls of fame, without regard to rules and formularies. Appearing as he did, in an age whose taste was depraved, he stands in the midst of it as a noble "stag of ten" amid a herd of fallow-deer grazing the same pasture; and, though necessarily placed among those writers with whom he was contemporaneous, our remarks on the Floral Poetry of this period must not be supposed to apply to that by the almost inspired author of the finest epic in the world.

It has, indeed, been truly remarked, that Milton is not always correct in his descriptions of flowers, either in their characters or their times of blooming; but that he appreciated their loveliness, and acknowledged their influence on the affections, is proved by the fact, that

he made Eve's last lamentation, on her expulsion from Paradise, an exquisitely pathetic address to her flowers :—

" O unexpected stroke, worse than of death!
Must I thus leave thee, Paradise? thus leave
Thee, native soil, these happy walks and shades,
Fit haunt of gods? where I had hope to spend,
Quiet, tho' sad, the respite of that day
That must be mortal to us both.—O flowers!
That never will in other climate grow,
My early visitation, and my last
At even, which I bred up with tender hand,
From the first opening bud, and gave ye names;
Who now shall rear ye to the sun, or rank
Your tribes, and water from the ambrosial fount?
Thee lastly, nuptial bower, by me adorned,
With what to sight or smell was sweet, from thee
How shall I part?"

DESCRIPTION OF PARADISE.

" The crispid brooks,
Rolling on orient pearl and sands of gold,
With mazy error under pendent shades,
Ran nectar, visiting each plant, and fed
Flowers worthy of Paradise; which not nice Art,
In beds and curious knots, but Nature boon
Pour'd forth profuse, on hill, and dale, and plain;
Both where the morning sun first warmly smote
The open field, and where the unpierced shade
Imbrown'd the noontide bowers. Thus was this place
A happy rural seat of various view;
Groves, whose rich trees wept odorous gums and balm;
Others, whose fruit burnish'd with golden rind,
Hung amiable, Hesperian fables true,
If true, here only, and of delicious taste:
Betwixt them, lawns or level downs, and flocks
Grazing the tender herb, were interposed;
Or palmy hillock, or the flowery lap
Of some irriguous valley spread her store;
Flowers of all hue, and without thorn the rose."

EVE'S NUPTIAL BOWER.

"Thus talking, hand in hand alone, they pass'd
On to their blissful bower; it was a place
Chosen by the Sovereign Planter, when he framed
All things to man's delightful use; the roof,
Of thickest covert, was inwoven shade,
Laurel and myrtle, and what higher grew
Of firm and fragrant leaf; on either side
Acanthus, and each odorous bushy shrub,
Fenced up the verdant wall; each beauteous flower,
Iris all hues, roses, and jessamine,
Rear'd high their flourish'd heads between, and wrought
Mosaic; underfoot the violet,
Crocus, and hyacinth, with rich inlay,
Broider'd the ground, more color'd than with stone
Of costliest emblem. * *
* * Here in close recess,
With flowers, garlands, and sweet-smelling herbs,
Espoused Eve deck'd first her nuptial bed."

Allan Ramsay is a name which we approach with feelings akin to those with which the traveller through the desert approaches the springs, which are to slake his thirst and refresh his wearied steeds.

Since the commencement of this period, our journey has been through a barren unprofitable waste (which, however, we have spared the reader from traversing with us), on whose spacious face scarce a flower grew, or a tree broke the distant horizon; but now we suddenly reach a spot where Nature is blooming, and where her fairest productions show most fair.

It seems almost incredible that the same epoch which witnessed the host of wretched imitations of Theocritus and Bion, called "Pastorals," should also boast of "the Gentle Shepherd," which stands pre-eminent as a perfect picture of Scottish rural life—natural, simple, and unsophisticated. Ramsay, however, is a better depicter of rustic manners than of inanimate scenery; his forte lay in describing mental rather than physical phenomena, although he was not blind to the beauties of wild Nature. It is a pleasure to be able to close this chapter with a simple

garden scene, entirely free from the vices of the age, and at the same time illustrative of the cause of Ramsay's superiority over his contemporaries; he loved Nature rather than Art, and despised the rules of the critics and the artificial bondage of the Aristotelian theorists.

"I love the garden wild and wide,
Where oaks have plum trees by their side;
Where woodbines and the twisting vine
Clip round the pear-tree and the pine;
Where mix'd jonquils and gowans grow,
And roses midst rank clover blow
Upon a bank of a clear strand,
In wrimplings made by Nature's hand;
Though docks and brambles here and there
May sometimes cheat the gardener's care,
Yet this to me 's a Paradise
Compar'd with prim-cut plots and nice,
Where Nature has to Art resign'd,
Till all looks mean, stiff, and confin'd.

* * * *

Heaven Homer taught; the critic draws
Only from him and such their laws;
The native bards first plunge the deep,
Before the artful dare to leap."

Division IV.

1725 to 1780.

"Mark how Nature's hand bestows
Abundant grace on all that grows,
Tinges, with pencil slow unseen,
The grass that clothes the valley green,
Or spreads the tulip's parted streaks,
Or sanguine dyes the rose's cheeks."

W. HAMILTON.

It was in this period that the first symptoms of a better taste, and a return to a more natural and simple style of thought, began to appear, but still without producing any results of sterling value.

The Scylla on which the preceding age foundered was over-refinement, and as men generally run into extremes, the age now under consideration was ingulfed in the Charybdis of a bald and trifling simplicity.

Of all the springs of Helicon, the rill of simplicity is the most speedily intoxicating. A weak head instantly sinks under its influence into inanity or maudlin sentimentality. None but the strongest can "drink deep" of the water, and derive benefit from the draught. The heads of those writers who at this period sipped of the rill—dangerous and tempting as the juice of the grape—were weak; and the consequences were such, that if the next age had not produced strong heads and sound hearts, capable of drinking deeply, yet beneficially, the rill itself would have again fallen into disrepute.

With a return to a more natural train of thought, flowers were restored to poetry, and permitted to spring, though not very vigorously, in the more congenial soil.

Many of the poets of this period lived in the country, and there acquired a genuine love for Nature's beauties; and it is to be regretted, that such ardent admirers of flowers, as Shenstone, Langhorne, and John Scott, should have been unequal to the task of doing full justice to the objects and scenes which their tastes led them to frequent. They exemplified the dangerous influence of a love of simplicity on minds deficient in power and strong sense.

James Thomson formed an era in Poetry; for the publication of "The Seasons" was the first effort made to re-unite the Muse to Nature; though he certainly cannot be accused of erring on the side of simplicity. Had Thomson lived a century earlier or later, it is probable that he would have clothed his language in a more simple garb. That he did not do so, is to be attributed to the vicious taste of the age in which he lived. We shall often find that when a flower has been absent from poetry ever since the Elizabethan age, it has been restored by Thomson, and has again become an object of the poet's regard; and this fact fully justifies our placing Thomson at the commencement of a new period in Floral Poetry. The flowers of the garden which he so beautifully describes, will be found in their proper places in our pages; here, we shall only subjoin his more general description of the flowers of the field:—

"Oh come! and while the rosy-footed May
Steals blushing on, together let us tread
The morning dews, and gather in their prime
Fresh-blooming flowers. * * *
* * * * * *
Nor is the mead unworthy of thy foot,
Full of fresh verdure, and unnumber'd flowers,
The negligence of Nature, wide and wild;
Where, undisguised by mimic Art, she spreads
Unbounded beauty to the roving eye.
Here their delicious task the fervent bees,
In swarming millions, tend: around, athwart,
Through the soft air, the busy nations fly,
Cling to the bud, and, with inserted tube,
Suck its pure essence, its ethereal soul,
And oft with bolder wing, they soaring dare
The purple heath, or where the wild thyme grows,
And yellow load them with the luscious spoil."

William Shenstone, whose poetry is more distinguished for easy sweetness than for depth of thought, lived a poet's life, and devoted his whole time and fortune to the embellishment of his paternal acres, the Leasowes, and the revival of a taste for a more natural style of gardening. The materials for his muse were those around him; consequently the flowers of his garden and fields are often culled to embellish his poetry, from which we shall have more frequent occasion to quote hereafter than in this place.

"Shepherd, would'st thou here obtain
Pleasure unalloy'd with pain?
Joy that suits the rural sphere?
Gentle shepherd lend an ear.

Learn to relish calm delight,
Verdant vales and fountains bright;
Trees that nod on sloping hills,
Caves that echo tinkling rills.

If thou can'st no charm disclose
In the simplest bud that blows;
Go, forsake thy plain and fold,
Join the crowd, and toil for gold.

* * * *

See to sweeten thy repose,
The blossom buds, the fountain flows.
Lo! to crown thy healthful board,
All that milk and fruits afford.

Seek no more—the rest is vain;
Pleasure ending soon in pain;
Anguish lightly gilded o'er:
Close thy wish, and seek no more."

There is a lively vigour about the following ballad by Christopher Smart, which reminds us of some of the lighter pieces of Burns:—

SWEET WILLIAM.

"By a prattling stream, on a midsummer's eve,
Where the woodbine and jess'mine their boughs interweave,
Fair Flora, I cry'd, to my arbour repair,
For I must have a chaplet for sweet William's hair.

She brought me the vi'let that grows on the hill,
The vale-dwelling lily, and gilded jonquil;
But such languid odours how could I approve,
Just warm from the lips of the lad that I love?

She brought me, his faith and his truth to display,
The undying myrtle and evergreen bay;
But why these to me, who 've his constancy known?
And Billy has laurels enough of his own.

The next was a gift that I could not contemn,
For she brought me two roses that grew on a stem:
Of the dear nuptial tie they stood emblems confess'd,
So I kiss'd 'em, and press'd 'em quite close to my breast.

She brought me a sun-flower—this, fair one, 's your due,
For it once was a maiden, and love-sick like you—
Oh! give it me quick, to my shepherd I'll run,
As true to his flame as this flower to the sun."

JOHN SCOTT, the first Quaker poet, was, like Shenstone, strongly attached to the pleasures of the garden, and, during great part of a quiet retired life, found amusement in beautifying a small hereditary estate. He was an accurate cataloguer of his flowers, and was fond of introducing them, with their humble brethren of the field, into his poetry. The selection of flowers in each of the following descriptions is quakerly correct both as to locality and season:—

A HEATH. *(Spring.)*

"A heath's gay wild lay pleasant to the view,
With shrubs and field-flowers deck'd of varied hue:
There hawthorns tall their silver bloom disclos'd,
Here flexile brooms bright yellow interpos'd;
There purple orchis, here pale daisies spread,
And sweet May lilies richest odours shed."

A COPSE'S SIDE. *(Summer.)*

"Sweet was the covert where the swains reclin'd!
There spread the wild rose, there the woodbine twin'd;
There stood the green fern, there o'er the grassy ground,
Sweet camomile and alehoof crept around;

And centaury red, and yellow cinque-foil grew,
And scarlet campion, and cyanus blue;
And tufted thyme, and marjoram's purple bloom,
And ruddy strawberries yielding rich perfume—
Gay flies their wings on each fair flower display'd,
And labouring bees a lulling murmur made."

JOHN LANGHORNE was another poet with strong predilections for flowers, on which he founded several instructive fables, entitled "Fables of Flora." The following lines are from one of his Elegies:—

"Blows not a blossom on the breast of spring,
Breathes not a gale along the bending mead,
Trills not a songster of the soaring wing,
But fragrance, health, and melody succeed.

O let me still with simple Nature live,
My lowly field-flowers on her altar lay,
Enjoy the blessings that she meant to give,
And calmly waste my inoffensive day!

Nor seldom, loit'ring as I muse along,
Mark from what flower the breeze its sweetness bore;
Or listen to the labour-soothing song
Of bees that range the thymy uplands o'er.

Slow let me climb the mountain's airy brow,
The green height gain'd in museful rapture lie;
Sleep to the murmur of the woods below,
Or look on Nature with a lover's eye.

* * * * *

Firm be my heart to Nature and to Truth,
Nor vainly wander from their dictates sage;
So Joy shall triumph on the brows of youth,
So Hope shall smooth the dreary paths of age."

Division V.

1780 to ——

"How sweet it is, when mother Fancy rocks
The wayward brain, to saunter through a wood!
An old place full of many a lovely brood,
Tall trees, green arbours, and ground flowers in flocks."

WORDSWORTH.

In a previous chapter we compared the Floral Poetry of the Elizabethan era to the mixed border of a garden; the same class of poetry in this period partakes more of the aspect of the bed devoted to select flowers, in which the highest beauty and perfection of individual specimens are aimed at. Indeed, in each period, as we have previously observed, it may be perceived that the poetry is adapted to the prevalent taste displayed in the cultivation of the garden.

In the time of Chaucer the garden was little fostered, and the pleasure-grounds partook chiefly of that wild robustness of Nature which is so conspicuous a source of the waters of "the deep well of English undefiled." In the Elizabethan age, the pleasaunce, the curious knot, the maze, planted with every attainable variety of shrub and flower in harmonious commixture, were the desideratum; and the profusion with which flowers are in like manner mingled in the poetical works of the same period, justifies their comparison. In the next age, from Waller to Ramsay, the garden was trammelled in the monstrosities of the Dutch style; when canal-like ponds, straight walks, and "topiary work," were preferred to any thing like an appearance of natural

irregularity. As in the poetry of Cowley, which we have before quoted, the object was to denaturalize every thing natural, so, in the private demesne, hills were levelled to terraced flats, winding brooks cut into right lines, trees deformed to birds, beasts, temples, and statues; and if Cowley, in his "Ode to Solitude," had desiderated a garden of his time, instead of a solitary wood, he might have *justly* said,

> "Here Nature does for me a *house* erect,
> Nature the fairest *architect!*"

for into such were Nature and her works converted. Lord Walpole said truly, "any man who had never been out of Holborn might have formed a garden of the Dutch style, for he had only to imitate the street in which he lived;" so also any poet who had never been out of a garret in the same street, might (as many did) have written the "pastorals" of the same date.

Next in order came the age of Thomson, when both gardening and poetry began to revert to Nature, and the English, or Natural Style took its rise. In our own day the interest of the general garden is sunk in that of the greenhouse and conservatory, and externally has yielded to the cultivation of individual flowers. It is not uncommon to see a beautiful garden disregarded and sacrificed to the cultivation of one or two species of plants, it being now the sole ambition of the horticulturist to display some new or strange-coloured flower, even though perfectly useless as a part of the general ornament of the garden. And this is no less the case in Floral Poetry; for nearly all the entire pieces devoted to special flowers are found amongst writers of the latter part of the eighteenth century down to the present day. The elder poets loved flowers for their own sakes and sought not to clothe them in adventitious beauties. If a sentiment were attached, a word was sufficient to convey it; and the sentiment was always made subordinate to the flower. But in the present period the flower is too often used only as a medium for the elaboration of the sentiment, and the beauty of the former is forgotten in the excitement of the latter

Still, in no period, have flowers, both individually and collectively, found more admirers than in the present; and many a volume has been formed of modern Floral Poetry alone. But, as we have remarked in

the preface, we shall refrain from extending our extracts into the present period, excepting indeed, by a few short snatches, little brilliant gems, which, adorning longer works, partake more of the character of the old style of Floral Poetry, and are, perhaps, less generally known than the entire pieces professedly treating of flowers.

William Cowper was of a nature too gentle and amiable not to be a lover of flowers, and too religiously disposed not to see in his favourites the most striking evidences of the wisdom of the Creator, and of the happiness to be found in the contemplation of his works :—

"Nature is but a name for an effect,
Whose cause is God. * * *
* * * Not a flower
But shows some touch, in freckle, streak, or stain,
Of His unrivall'd pencil—He inspires
Their balmy odours, and imparts their hues,
And bathes their eyes with nectar, and includes,
In grains as countless as the sea-side sands,
The forms with which he sprinkles all the earth.
Happy who walks with Him! whom what he finds
Of flavour or of scent in fruit or flower,
Or what he views of beautiful or grand
In nature, from the broad majestic oak
To the green blade that twinkles in the sun,
Prompts with remembrance of a present God.
His presence, who made all so fair, perceived,
Makes all still fairer."

What has been said of the Floral Poetry of Shakspere is equally applicable to that of Robert Burns; for though he very frequently describes individual flowers, he rarely mentions the generic term. Like Shakspere, the exactness of his knowledge of their habits and properties enabled him to be precise in his illustrations; and in the chapters on individual flowers we shall have frequent occasion to quote from his works.

Charlotte Smith is one of the most accurate and copious of floral poets, and has won the rarely-yielded meed of praise from Wordsworth, himself a fond worshipper of flowers. The following lines display at once the sources and the extent of her botanical knowledge :—

"An early worshipper at Nature's shrine,
I loved her rudest scenes,—warrens, and heaths,
And yellow commons, and birch-shaded hollows,
And hedgerows, bordering unfrequented lanes,
Bowered with wild-roses, and the clasping woodbine,
Where purple tassels of the tangling vetch
With bittersweet and briony inweave,
And the dew fills the silver bindweed's cups—
I loved to trace the brooks whose humid banks
Nourish the harebell and the freckled pagil;
And stroll among o'ershadowing woods of beech,
Lending in summer, from the heats of noon
A whispering shade; while haply there reclines
Some pensive lover of uncultured flowers,
Who, from the stumps with bright green mosses clad,
Plucks the woodsorrel with its light thin leaves,
Heart shaped and triply folded, and its root
Creeping like beaded coral."

We could multiply quotations to an unlimited extent from this authoress, but want of space forbids, and we shall have frequent occasion to refer to her hereafter.

John Keats joys, revels, and luxuriates in flowers,

"April's tender younglings."

To him

"The poetry of earth is never dead."

He writes as if his wish had been gratified:

"Give me a golden pen, and let me lean
On heap'd up flowers in regions clear and far;"

and as if his pen had been dipped in the juices of the flowers, and he had dyed his pages in their colours. He is never weary of eulogizing them, and in almost every page of his works are to be found,

"Garlands of every green and every scent,
From vales deflowered, or forest-trees branch-rent,
* * * to suit the thought
Of every guest, that each as he did please
Might fancy-fit his brows."

Percy Bysshe Shelley is not a less enthusiastic admirer of

"The children of the hours,"

as he fancifully calls flowers; and if what he says be true, that

"No sister flower would be forgiven,
If it disdained its brother,"

it would be well if the human tenants of the earth were to remember that they are likewise subject to a similar law.

Dorothea Felicia Hemans is another poetess from whom we might multiply quotations laudatory of flowers. It is to be noticed that she is exceedingly fond of introducing flowers to gladden for a time the chamber of sickness or of death.

The brief existence of the individual flower has been a frequent metaphor of the life of man; but Mrs. Hemans adduces the prolonged duration of the *species* to contrast with the rapid decay of his boasted works: and it is for the sake of this change in the stale—though ever beautiful—metaphor, that we select the following short passage:—

"* * * * * *
A frail shrub survives to bloom o'er Sparta's grave.

Oh! thus it is with man!—a tree, a flower,
While nations perish, still renews its race,
And o'er the fallen records of his power
Spreads in wild pomp, or smiles in fairy grace.
The laurel shoots when those have passed away
Once rivals for its crown, the brave, the free;
The rose is flourishing o'er beauty's clay,
The myrtle blows when love has ceased to be;
Green waves the bay when song and bard are fled,
And all that round us blooms, is blooming o'er the dead."

Mrs. Lætitia Elizabeth Maclean, better known as Miss Landon, or L. E. L., was, as will appear in subsequent pages, fond of playing odd freaks of fancy with flowers, especially with those of the garden, with which she was better acquainted than with wild ones; for, as she takes frequent occasion to boast, she hated the country, and knew no abode to be compared to London.

William Wordsworth loves

"the mute repose
Of sweetly breathing flowers,"

even to an excess of over-wrought feeling:—

"Thanks to the human heart by which we live,
Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears,
To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears."

And he exclaims,

"What joy more lasting than a vernal flower?"

But this refined sentiment is not engendered by the flower alone; it probably arises rather from its metaphysical associations; for

"Not from his fellows only man may learn
Rights to compare, and duties to discern!
All creatures and all objects, in degree,
Are friends and patrons of humanity.
There are to whom the garden, grove, and field,
Perpetual lessons of forbearance yield;
Who would not lightly violate the grace
The lowliest flower possesses in its place;
Nor shorten the sweet life, too fugitive,
Which nothing less than Infinite Power could give."

Or it may arise from contrasting the flower's joys with the cares of humanity, for he says,

"It is my faith that every flower
Enjoys the air it breathes."

He sums up in a few lines the appropriateness of flowers to all the occasions of human joy and sorrow:—

"———— flowers themselves, whate'er their hue,
With all their fragrance, all their glistening,
Call to the heart for inward listening;—
And though for bridal wreaths and tokens true,
Welcomed wisely, though a growth
Which the careless shepherd sleeps on,
As fitly spring from turf the mourner weeps on,
And without wrong are cropped the marble tomb to strew."

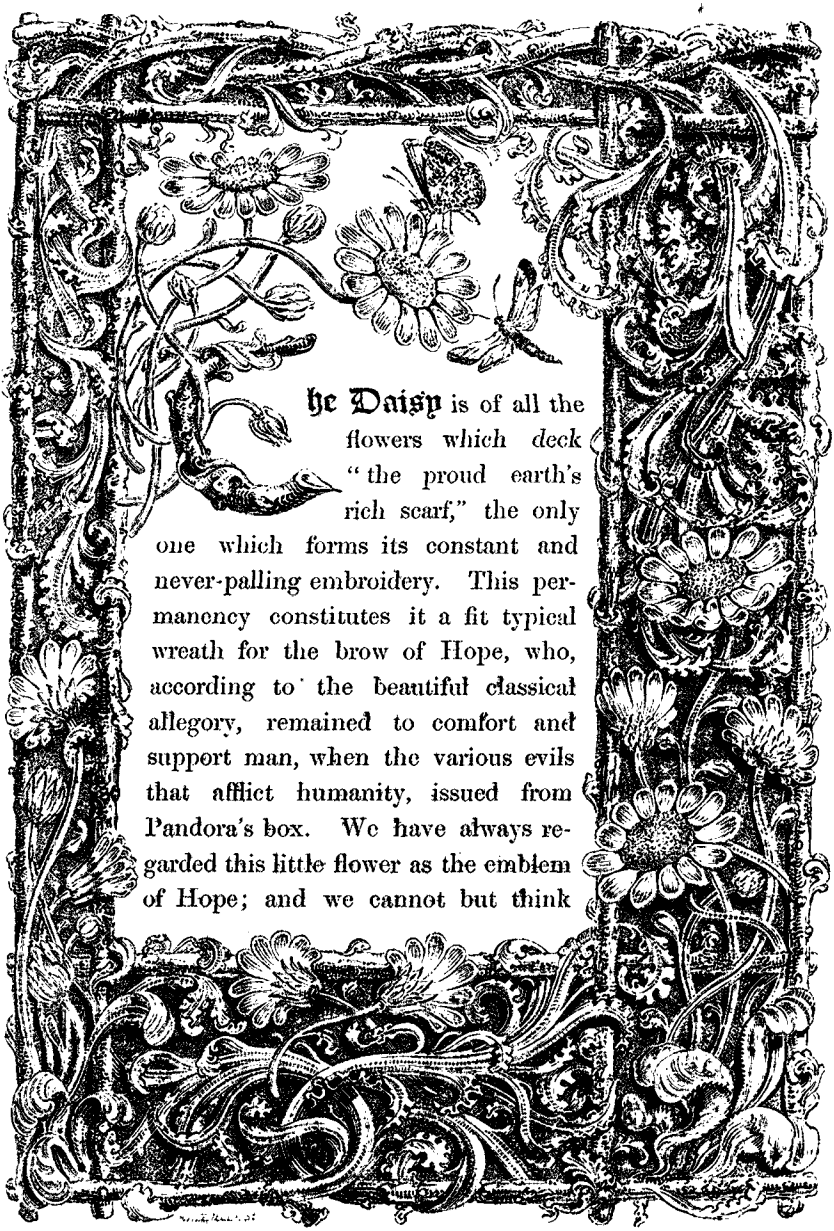
With these beautiful lines, the introductory remarks on Floral Poetry may appropriately be closed.

The Daisy.

BELLIS PERENNIS.

"We'll gae to some burn-side and play,
And gather flowers to busk ye'r brow;
We'll pu' the Daisies on the green,
The lucken gowans frae the bog."

ALLAN RAMSAY.



The Daisy is of all the flowers which deck "the proud earth's rich scarf," the only one which forms its constant and never-palling embroidery. This permanency constitutes it a fit typical wreath for the brow of Hope, who, according to the beautiful classical allegory, remained to comfort and support man, when the various evils that afflict humanity, issued from Pandora's box. We have always regarded this little flower as the emblem of Hope; and we cannot but think

that Chaucer had some such associations in his mind, when overwhelmed with care and harassed by oppressing thoughts, he arose from his sleepless couch to do homage to the Daisy with an adoration so intense, and in language so glowing and impassioned, as no other feeling could inspire.

But perhaps some portion of the fervour of those passionate outbursts is to be attributed to the then prevailing fashion of ladies and gallants choosing a flower to typify the object of their affection, and paying to it an adoration almost akin to that which had previously been rendered to a patron saint.

It is the fashion to contemn what is termed the puerilities of the flower-worshippers; but, for our part, we see in this practice the evidence of a better and more refined taste than that which had previously amused itself with monkish legends and exaggerated fables. It may have been a mere matter of fashion with the court gallant; but when minds such as Chaucer's adopted it to the extent exhibited in the beautiful lines quoted below, it is evident that it was associated with a higher feeling, and that a pure, unsophisticated love of one of the loveliest of Nature's works

influenced his mind, and gave birth to the words which flowed from his pen:—

"Now have I then eke this condition,
That of all the floures in the mede,
Then love I most these floures white and rede,
Such that men callen Daisies in our town.
To them I have so great affection,
As I said erst, when comen is the Maie,
That in my bedde there dawneth me no daie,
That I n'am up and walking in the mede,
To see this floure against the sunnè sprede.
When it up riseth early by the morrow,
That blissful sight softeneth all my sorrow,
So glad am I, when that I have presence
Of it, to done it all reverence,
As she that is of all floures the floure,
Fulfilled of all virtue and honour,
And ever ylike fair and fresh of hue,
And ever I love it, and ever ylike new,
And ever shall, till that mine heartè die,
All swear I not, of this I will not lie.

There loved no wight hotter in his life,
And when that it is eve I runnè blithe,
As soon as ever the sunnè 'ginneth west,
To see this floure, how it will go to rest;

For fear of night, so hateth she darkness,
Her cheer is plainly spread in the brightness
Of the sunnè, for there it will unclose:
Alas, that I ne had English rhyme or prose
Suffisaunt, this floure to praise aright.

* * * * *

My busie ghost, that thirsteth alway new,
To see this floure so young, so fresh of hue,
Constrained me, with so greedy desire,
That in my heartè I feel yet the fire,
That made me rise ere it were daie,
And this was now the first morrow of Maie,
With dreadful heartè, and glad devotion
For to been at the resurrection
Of this floure, when that it should unclose
Again' the sunnè, that rose as red as rose.

* * * * *

Adown full softèly I 'gan to sink,
And leaning on my elbow and my side,
The long day I shope me for to abide
For nothing else, and I shall not lie,
But for to looke upon the Daisie;
That well by reason men it call may
The Daisie, or else the eye of the day,
The Empress, and floure of floures all;
I pray to God that fairè mote she fall,
And all that loven floures, for her sake!

When that the sunnè out the south gan west,
And that this floure 'gan close, and gan to rest
For darkness of the night, the which she dread,
Home to mine house full swiftly I me sped
To gone to rest, and early for to rise,
To see this floure to spread, as I devise.

* * * * *

When I was laid, and had my eyen hid,
I fell asleep and slept an hour or two.
Me mete* how I lay in the meadow tho,
To seen this floure, that I love so and drede,
And from afar came walking in the mead,
The god of love, and in his hand a queen,
And she was clad in royal habit green,
A fret of gold she had next her hair,
And upon that a white crown she bear,
With flourouns small, and I shall not lie,
For all the world right as a Daisie
Ycrouned is with white leaves lite,
So were the florouns of her crown white,
For of o'perle fine oriental,
Her white crown was ymaked all;
For which the white crown above the green
Made her like a Daisie for to seem,
Consid'red eke her fret of gold above.

* *Mete*, dreamt.

The lady of the vision, so honoured by the hand of the God of Love, well deserved all the reverence he could pay her. She was the faithful Alcestis, who, when her husband was taken prisoner and condemned to a cruel death, laid down her life to save him—

"—— and for her trouthe
Was turned into a Daysye."

HAWES.

In another vision, Chaucer saw certain fays who were bent on "doing honour to the Daisie, some to the Flower, and some to the Leaf,—the meaning whereof is this: they which honour the Flower, a thing fading with every blast, are such as look after beauty and worldly pleasure; but they that honour the Leaf, which abideth with the root notwithstanding the frosts and winter storms, are they which follow virtue and during qualities, without regard of worldly respects." Now these fairies being come "into the mede,"

"In mid the which they found a tuft that was
All overspread with flowris in compass,
Whereto they inclined every one
With great reverence, and that full humbly;
And at the last there then began anon

A lady for to sing right womanly
A bargaret in praising the Daisie,
For (as methought) among her notis sweet
She said, *Si douce est la Margarete!*"

On several other occasions Chaucer enthusiastically apostrophizes the Daisy:—

"Mother of nurture, best beloved of all,
And freshé floure, to whom good thrift God send,
Your child, if it lust you me so to call,
All be' I' unable myself so to pretend,
To your discretion I recommend
Mine heart and all, with every circumstance,
All wholly to be under your governance."

And again:—

"O commendable floure, and most in mind!
O floure and gracious of excellence!
O amiable Margarite of native kind!
To whom I must resort with diligence,
With heart, will, thought, most lowly obedience,
I to be your servant, ye my regent,
For life, ne death, never for to repent."

John Skelton designates his lady-love "the

Daisy delectable;" and again, in another Love Sonnet, says:—

"Your colour
Is like the Daisy flower,
After the April shower,
Star of the morrow gray!"

Neither did Scotland's early poets forget the Daisy. Gawin Douglas describes it as the principal ornament of the meads in June, when—

"The Daisy did unbraid her crownel small,
* * * * *
The dewy green powdered with Daisies gay
Shew on the sward ane color dapple gray."

And Sir David Lyndesay in like manner:

"Where art thou, May, with June, thy sister schene,
Well bordered with Dasyis of delyte?"

And then we come to Spenser. What a quiet, shady nook on the copsed margin of a gentle stream does he conjure up!

"Lo! here the place whose pleasant sight
From other shades hath ween'd my wandering mind;

Tell me what wants me here to work delight?
The simple air, the gentle warbling wind,
So calm, so cool, as no where else I find;
The grassy ground with dainty Daisies dight,
The bramble bush, where birds of every kind
To th' waters' fall their tunes attemper right."

Spenser invests the Daisy with an hymeneal character, and introduces it into the Prothalamion, written for the marriages of the noble daughters of the Earl of Worcester, as

"The little Dazie that at evening closes."

Drayton was likewise an admirer of the Daisy for he gives it a place in his imaginary "Muses' Elysium," where he says it never closes against the darkness :—

"There Daisies damask every place
Nor once their beauties lose;
That when proud Phœbus hides his face
Themselves they scorn to close."

And we must detach from the wreath wrought for the Tame,

"The Daisy, over all those sundry sweets so thick,
As Nature doth herself, to imitate her right;
Who seems in that her pearl so greatly to delight
That every plain therewith she powdereth to behold."

The Daisy was the badge of the unhappy Margaret of Anjou, Queen of Henry VI., chosen by her, as by most other ladies with the same Christian name, on account of its French appellation Marguerite; being one of those fanciful conceits in which the wits of the time delighted. Drayton thus describes her progress to her unfortunate wedding:—

"Triumphal arches the glad town doth raise,
And tilts and turneys are performed at court,
Conceited masks, rich banquets, witty plays,
Besides amongst them many a pretty sport;
Poets write prothalamions in their praise,
Until men's ears were cloy'd with the report;
Of either sex, and who doth not delight
To wear the Daisy for Queen Margarite?"

And in another passage he describes her as writing, in her reverse of fortune, to William de-la-Poole, Duke of Suffolk,

"My Daisy flower which erst perfumed the air,
Which for my favour princes deigned to wear,
Now in the dust lies trodden on the ground."

We shall have occasion hereafter to show that the Violet was Shakspere's favourite flower; but Ophelia tells us that "they withered all when her father died," and she therefore substitutes "a Daisy." The "fantastic garlands" which she wrought to hang upon the "pendent willow boughs," were composed of

"Crow-flowers, nettles, Daisies, and long purples."*

Daisies are named among the flowers which herald in the Spring,

"When Daisies pied, and violets blue," &c.

The only other instance in which Shakspere alludes to the Daisy, is in the beautiful description of Lucretia sleeping:—

"Without the bed her other fair hand was
On the green coverlet, whose perfect white
Showed like an April Daisy on the grass,
With pearly sweat resembling dew of night."

* The "long purples" have been supposed to be the flowers of the purple Orchis, *Orchis mascula*. 2 With. Bot., p. 29.

W. Browne leads us to

"——— an humble dale,
Where tufty Daisies nod at every gale."

And speaks of

"The Daisy scatter'd on each mead and down,
A golden tuft within a silver crown.
Fair fall that dainty flower! and may there be
No shepherd graced that doth not honour thee."

He likewise mentions,

"The gentle Daisy with her silver crown,
Worn in the breast of many a shepherd lass."

Wither in his beautiful poem, "The Shepherds Hunting," felicitously describes the pleasures of the society of the Muse even under the most adverse circumstances—the Muse whose "divine skill" could sooth his prison hours with the recollection of Nature's beauties, and teach him to find solace and delight in "the meanest object's *sight*"—"a Daisy"—"*a shady* bush or tree:"—

"In my former days of bliss
Her divine skill taught me this,
That from every thing I saw
I could some invention draw,

And raise pleasure to her height
Through the meanest object's sight.
By the murmur of a spring,
Or the least bough's rustelling;
By a Daisy, whose leaves spread,
Shut when Titan goes to bed;
Or a shady bush, or tree,
She could more infuse in me,
Than all Nature's beauties can
In some other wiser man."

HERRICK.

TO DAISIES NOT TO SHUT SO SOON.

"Shut not so soon; the dull-eyed night
Has not as yet begun
To make a seizure on the light,
Or to seal up the sun.

No marigolds yet closed are,
No shadows great appear,
Nor doth th' early shepherd's star
Shine like a spangle here.

Stay but till my Julia close
Her life-begetting eye;
And let the whole world then dispose
Itself to live or die."

After this the notices of the Daisy are few, until the poets of our own day took it under their care.

J. Shirley notices

"*In their white double ruffs the Daisies set.*"

Peacham says,

"The Daisy teacheth lowliness of mind."

And Sir J. Suckling has a lively simile from it:

"Her cheeks so rare a white was on,
No Daisy makes comparison,
Who sees them is undone."

In the lovely landscape, which, in "L'Allegro," Milton delightedly surveys with the eye of fancy, he beholds

"Meadows trim, with Daisies pied;"

Or as he elsewhere, transposing the epithet, says,

"Daisies trim."

Such meadows as the Duchess of Newcastle describes:—

"Where Daisies grow as Mushrooms, in a night,
Mix'd white, and yellow, green, to please the sight;
At dawning day the dew all over spreads,

In little drops upon those Daisies' heads;
As thick as stars are set in Heaven high,
So Daisies on the earth as close do lie."

On the banks of the river which Cowley covets,

"Daisies, the first-born of the teeming Spring,
On each side their embroidery bring."

Parnell simply says,

"The smiling Daisies blow beneath the sun;"

And Churchill,

"—— the dwarf Daisy, which, like infants, clings,
And fears to leave the earth from whence it springs."

When the amiable-minded Shenstone lamented his inability to purchase the higher pleasures of benevolence—probably, because he aimed at too much, and neglected what lay in his power—he found an inferior source of gratification

"—— where the circular eye
Of Daisy decrees to bask supine."

"Faint is my bounded bliss; nor I refuse
To range where Daisies open, rivers roll;
While prose, or song, the languid hours amuse,
And sooth the fond impatience of my soul."

Langhorne is the first poet who notices the truly perennial character of the Daisy, in a stanza which might serve for a motto to Dr. Mason Good's beautiful and well-known lines:—

"That Daisy in its simple bloom,
Shall last along the changing year;
Blush on the snow of Winter's gloom,
And bid the smiling Spring appear."

From this period,—or rather, we might say, from one still earlier with these exceptions,—until Burns again opened the gates of Nature, and let out a beauteous light upon the world, Daisies do not appear in poetry save as affording a standing *Gradus ad Parnassum* epithet for "meadows." Burns has the merit of re-introducing this lovely flower, and, as if to compensate for its long absence, honours its return with a strain superior in natural beauty to any it had yet received.

When we find poets, such as Chaucer and Burns, paying to the

"Wee, modest, crimson tipped flower"

some of the highest tributes of their Muse, we are compelled to believe that, humble as it is, it

possesses attractions which it is not given to inferior spirits fully to appreciate.

No wonder that Burns loved this flower, for in "the lowly Daisy" which "sweetly blows" he found an emblem of himself,—"a rustic Bard." And as he elsewhere says in lines which might also be fitly applied to him who was the least artificial of modern poets,

"The Daisy's for simplicity and unaffected air:"

for which reason he adds, he loved it; and loved, too, to find its qualities in "dear woman:"—

"The Daisy amused my fond fancy,
So artless, so simple, so wild;
Thou emblem, said I, of my Phyllis,
For she is simplicity's child."

Soon after Burns's beautiful address to the Daisy, Wordsworth published some very fine lines on the same theme; and, by pointing out Chaucer's love for "*la bel Margarete,*" threw the charm of ancient authority over its more modern claims to regard. Hence a copious flood of admiration has latterly been poured out upon the Daisy, and numerous poets have since striven to discover new beauties and emblems in this little flower.

In the "Horologe of Flowers," Mrs. C. Smith introduces it to indicate the approach of evening:

"And thou, 'wee crimson-tipped flower,'
Gatherest thy fringed mantle round
Thy bosom at the closing hour,
When night-drops bathe the turfy ground."

Shelly says of it:—

"Daisies, those pearl'd Arcturi of the earth,
The constellated flower that never sets."

Keats has a beautiful fancy:—

"—— the dew
Had taken fairy phantasies to strew
Daisies upon the sward last eve,
And so the dawned light in pomp receive."

When, as Keats describes,

"—— the Daisies, vermeil-rim'd and white,
Hide in deep herbage,"

the petals close up, showing only the calyx; and the little green ball, now scarcely distinguishable amongst the grass, which, perhaps, half an hour before it made of "a colour dapple-grey," looks so like a pea, as to have caused Hogg quaintly to describe eventide as the time

"—— when the Daisy turns a pea;"

though this change of the Daisy from white to green, hardly accords with Hogg's assigning it as an altar-cloth to the Evening Star :—

"Thine altar-cloth the Daisy flower,—
Pure as that heavenly breast of thine,
And fairer than the virgin snow."

But this idea is much less beautiful than that which chooses it as an emblem of childhood, gone, in its beauty and innocence, to everlasting rest:—

"And long the Daisy, emblem meet,
Shall shed its earliest tear o'er thee."

Many other modern poets have delighted

"—— above the tomb,
Emblem of peace, to bid the Daisy bloom."
LEYDEN.

"When evening brings the merry folding-hours,
And sun-eyed Daisies close their winking flowers,"

Leyden loved, in imitation of Chaucer, to watch their closing petals; and he also learnt from "the father of English poetry" to apostrophize the sensitive little plant:—

"Star of the mead! sweet daughter of the day,
Whose opening flower invites the morning ray,
From thy moist cheek and bosom's chilly fold,
To kiss the tears of eve, the dew-drops cold!
Sweet Daisy! flower of love! when birds are *pair'd*,
'Tis sweet to see thee with thy bosom bared,
Smiling in virgin innocence serene,
Thy pearly crown above thy vest of green:
The lark, with sparkling eye and rustling wing,
Rejoins his widow'd mate in early Spring,
And, as he prunes his plumes of russet hue,
Swears on thy maiden blossom to be true.

* * * * *

Oft have I watched thy closing buds at eve,
Which for the parting sunbeams seem'd to grieve,
And, when gay morning gilt the dew-bright plain,
Seen them unclasp their folded leaves again;
Nor he, who sung 'The daisy is so sweet,'
More dearly loved thy pearly form to greet;
When on his scarf the knight the Daisy bound,
And dames at tourneys shone with Daisies crown'd,
And fays forsook the purer fields above,
To hail the Daisy, flower of faithful love."

L. E. L., in one of her fanciful descriptions of flowers, says:—

"—— those small flowers,
Daisies, whose rose-touch'd leaves retrace
The gold and blush of morning hours."

Clare has a devotional appeal to the Daisy:

"Daisies, ye flowers of lowly birth,
Embroiderers of the carpet earth,
That stud the velvet sod;
Open to Spring's refreshing air,
In sweetest, smiling bloom declare
Your Maker, and my GOD."

The closing of the Daisy, when it

"— *sleeps upon the dewy lawn,*
Not lifting yet the head which evening bowed,"

WORDSWORTH.

is a subject of deep philosophising by the first of modern philosophical poets:—

"Observe how dewy twilight has withdrawn
The crowd of Daisies from the shaven lawn,
And has restored to view its tender green,
That, while the sun rode high, was lost beneath
their dazzling sheen!
An emblem this of what the sober hour
Can do for minds disposed to feel its power!
Thus oft, when we in vain have wish'd away

The petty pleasures of the garish day,
Meek Eve shuts up the whole usurping host
(Unbashful dwarfs each glittering at his post),
And leaves the *disencumber'd spirit free*
To re-assume a staid simplicity."

IBID.

And again in a like *thoughtful vein*:—

"Small service is true service while it lasts;
Of Friends, however humble, scorn not one:
The Daisy by the shadow that it casts,
Protects the lingering dew-drop from the sun."

Wordsworth, as we have said, adopted the Daisy, and has dedicated no less than four distinct pieces to its honour; but he unjustly claims the merit which belongs to Burns, and asserts himself to be its restorer to the realms of poetry, though in another of his works he has done more justice to his predecessor:—

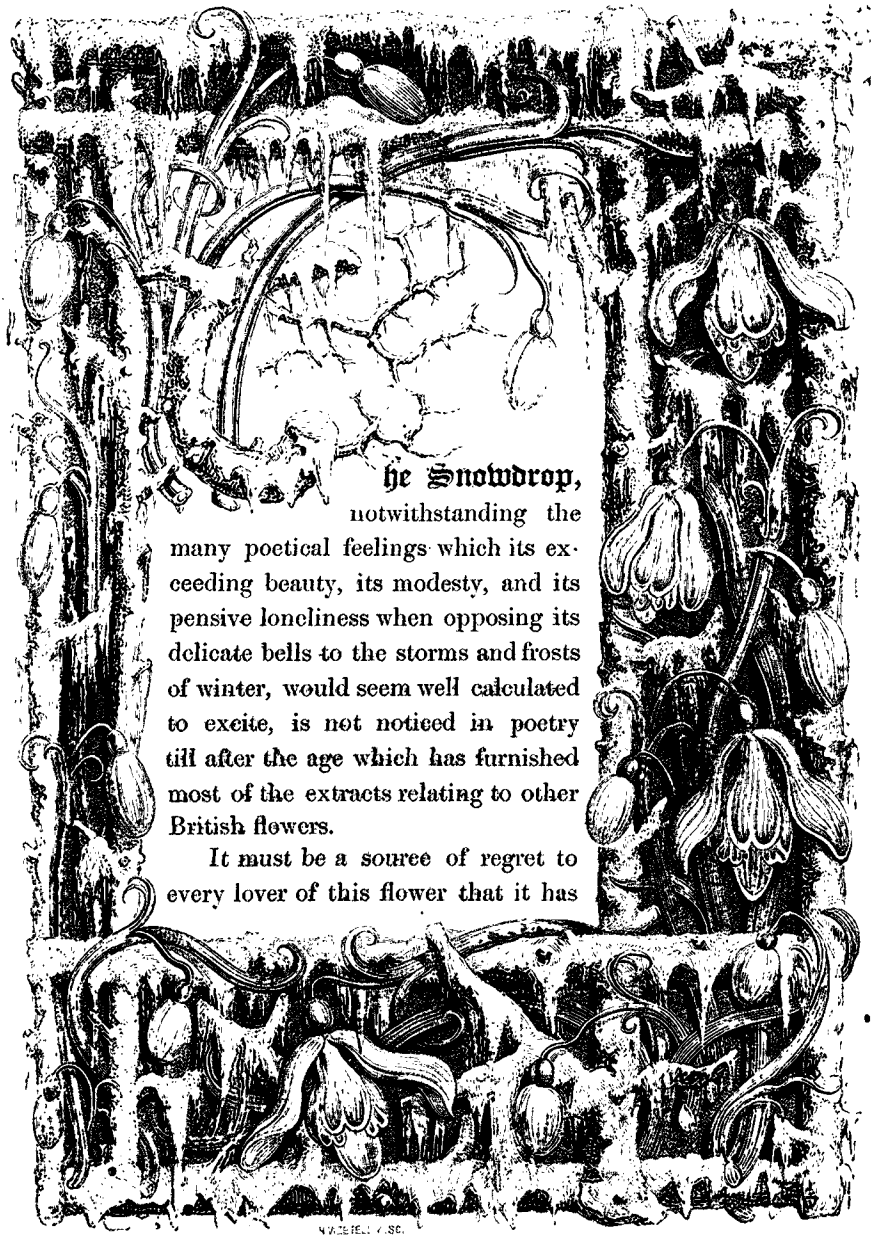
"Beneath 'the random *bield* of clod or stone'
Myriads of Daisies have shone forth in flower
Near the lark's nest, and in their natural hour
Have pass'd away; less happy than the One
That, by the unwilling ploughshare, died to prove
The tender charm of poetry and love!"

The Snowdrop.

GALANTHUS NIVALIS.

"The frail Snow-drop,
Born of the breath of Winter, and on his brow
Fix'd like a pale and solitary star."

B. CORNWALL.



The Snowdrop, notwithstanding the many poetical feelings which its exceeding beauty, its modesty, and its pensive loneliness when opposing its delicate bells to the storms and frosts of winter, would seem well calculated to excite, is not noticed in poetry till after the age which has furnished most of the extracts relating to other British flowers.

It must be a source of regret to every lover of this flower that it has

not been associated with the name of Shakspere, who has "stellified" so many flowers; and we cannot but think, that if it had been known to Milton by its name of Snowdrop, he would have given it a place in Paradise *in* company with, if not in preference to, its more showy associate the Crocus.

One cause of its absence from poetry, is its having borne a name which would render it likely to be confounded with the Violet; for it was chiefly known as the bulbous white violet, *Viola bulbosa alba*, or *leucoium*. From Gerarde's quaint account of its long compounded synonyme, it will be seen that it was then (1592) scarcely decided in what family to place this delicate spring flower:—

"This species is called of Theophrastus, Λευκοιον, which Gaza renders *Viola alba*, and *Viola bulbosa*, or bulbed violet. Lobelius has, from the colour and shape, called it *Leuco-narcisso-lirion*, and that very properly, considering how it doth as it were participate of two sundry plants: that is to say, the root of the narcissus, the leaves of the small lily, and the white colour; taking the first part, *leuco*, of his whitenesse, *narcisso*, of the likeness the roots have

unto narcissus, and *lirium*, of the leaves of lilies as aforesaid. In English we may call it the bulbous violet, or after the Dutch, somer-sottekens, that is, sommer-fooles—some call them also Snow-drops." But the latter English name does not seem to have been generally known, for it is not mentioned by Parkinson or any other early florist. Gerarde adds,—"These plants doe grow wild in Italy and the parts adjacent, notwithstanding our London gardens have taken possession of most of them many years past."

Although modern botanists have placed the Snowdrop in the catalogue of British indigenous plants, it is evident, from the last passage, that the well-informed and accurate Gerarde did not know it as such; and, as it is a plant which very rapidly increases wherever it once takes root, we much doubt whether, if it were wild in England in Gerarde's time, he would have overlooked it. At all events, it is a fair conclusion, that in the Elizabethan era it was so rare, as to be unknown to poets, who have left few of the chief ornaments of our meads unsung; and we may infer, from Gerarde's fixing the date of its introduction "to within time of memory," that it was not a very frequent garden flower in his time. Thus we may easily account

for its being unnoticed by those writers who have won for themselves, and the things whereof they have discoursed, a glorious immortality upon earth.

Tickell is the first poet who mentions the Snow-drop, in his amusing mock-heroic, entitled, "*Kensington Garden;*" the subject of which is, "The Loves of the Fairy Kenna, and a Mortal Prince of Fairy Nurture."

The unhappy prince having been slain by an immortal rival, his disconsolate mistress exerts her supernatural powers to commemorate his death by converting his remains into a Snowdrop:

"Tried every art to change his doom,
And vow'd to join him in the tomb—
What could she do? the Fates alike deny,
The dead to live, or fairy forms to die.
An herb there grows (the same old Homer tells
Ulysses bore to rival Circe's spells),
Moly the plant, which gods and fairies know,
But secret kept from mortal men below:
On his pale limbs its virtuous juice she shed,
And murmur'd mystic numbers o'er the dead.
When lo! the little shape by magic power
Grew less and less, contracted to a flower;
A flower, that first in this sweet garden smiled,

To virgins sacred, and the Snowdrop styled.
The newborn plant with sweet regret she view'd,
Warm'd with her sighs, and with her tears bedew'd,
Its ripen'd seeds from bank to bank convey'd,
And with her lover whiten'd half the shade.
Thus won from death each Spring she sees him grow,
And glories in the vegetable snow;
Which now increas'd thro' wide Britannia's plains,
Its parent's warmth and spotless name retains;
First leader of the flowery race aspires,
And foremost catches the sun's genial fires,
'Mid frosts and snows triumphant dares appear,
Mingles the Seasons, and leads on the Year."

From Tickell's fabulous account of the origin of the Snowdrop, in a nearly wild state in the fashionable gardens of Kensington, it may be presumed that even in his time it was not considered naturally indigenous, and hence some account of its origin was necessary.

Thomson was the first poet, really to place it in a garden as one of its earliest ornaments:—

"Fair-handed Spring unbosoms every grace;
Throws out the Snowdrop and the crocus first."

After this example no garden was mentioned without the Snowdrop and crocus.

Thus Savage, immediately after:—

"The virgin Snowdrop first appears;
Her golden head the crocus rears."

And Churchill:—

"The Snowdrop, who in habit white and plain,
Comes on the herald of fair Flora's train;"

Likewise J. Scott:—

"Soon shall kind Spring her flowery gifts bestow
On sunny banks, where silver Snowdrops blow."

And Mason:—

"The modest Snowdrop vernal silver bears."

The Snowdrop has since become the avowed favourite of modern poets, and numerous have been the efforts to do it honour.

The rapid progress in mental cultivation, which took place about the commencement of the present century, was in nothing more manifest than in the expansion of the female intellect; and at no period of the history of English

Literature, perhaps at no period of the world, were such undeniable proofs ever given of the ability of women to portray with superior power all that concerns the affections, the sentiments, and the moral and religious duties of mankind. The names of Hannah More, Barbauld, Tighe, Hemans, and other lamented writers, together with those who still survive to us, place this assertion, beyond the pale of controversy. Simultaneous with this new era in literature is the Snowdrop's best right to claim a poetical history;—a right which it owes to the fair sex with whom it appears to have been a deserved favourite. Mrs. Tighe describes it as

" —— the Wintry flower,
That, whiter than the snow it blooms among,
Droops its fair head submissive to the power
Of every angry blast which sweeps along,
Sparing the lovely trembler, while the strong
Majestic tenants of the leafless wood
It levels low."

Mrs. Barbauld, inviting her friend to retire

" From idle hurry, and tumultuous noise,
From hollow friendships, and from sickly joys,
To the pure pleasures rural scenes inspire,"

rightly desires her to come and see the first dawning of the year, and watch its unfolding beauties, even when no flower is blooming save

"The first pale blossom of the unripen'd year,
As Flora's breath, by some transforming power,
Had changed an icicle into a flower:
Its name, and hue, the scentless plant retains,
And Winter lingers in its icy veins."

Mrs. C. Smith twice celebrates the Snowdrop *at length; and also says of it,*

"Fair rising from her icy couch,
Wan herald of the Floral year,
The Snowdrop marks the Spring's approach,
Ere yet the Primrose groups appear,
Or peers the Arum from its spotted veil,
Or odorous Violets scent the cold capricious gale."

MRS. C. SMITH.

SNOWDROPS.

"Wan heralds of the Sun and Summer gale!
That seem just fallen from infant Zephyr's wing;
Not now, as once, with heart revived I hail
Your modest buds, that for the brow of Spring

Form the first simple garland—Now, no more,
Escaping for a moment all my cares,
Shall I with pensive, silent, step explore
The woods yet leafless, where to chilling airs
Your green and pencill'd blossoms, trembling, wave.
Ah! ye soft, transient children of the ground,
More fair was she on whose untimely grave
Flow my unceasing tears! Their varied round
The Seasons go; while I through all repine:
For fixt regret, and hopeless grief are mine."

The unfortunate Mrs. Mary Robinson, whose short-lived splendour was purchased by long years of painful remorse and neglect, has left some beautiful lines to the Snowdrop; which possess an additional interest from the similitude which she finds in its situation to her own fate, and to that of all on whom "the sunny beam" of love "no touch of genial warmth bestows:"—

"The Snowdrop, Winter's timid child,
Awakes to life, bedew'd with tears,
And flings around its fragrance mild;
And where no rival flowerets bloom,
Amid the bare and chilling gloom,
A beauteous gem appears.

All weak and wan with head inclined,
Its parent breast, the drifted snow;
It trembles while the ruthless wind
Bends its slim form; the tempest lowers,
Its emerald eye droops crystal showers
On its cold bed below.

Poor flower! on thee the sunny beam
No touch of genial warmth bestows,
Except to thaw the icy stream,
Whose little current purls along
Thy fair and glossy charms among,
And whelms thee as it flows.

The night-breeze tears thy silky dress,
Which deck'd with silvery lustre shone;
The morn returns not thee to bless;
The gaudy crocus flaunts its pride,
And triumphs, where its rival died,
Unshelter'd and unknown.

No sunny beam shall gild thy grave,
No bird of pity thee deplore,
There shall no spreading branches wave;
For Spring shall all her gems unfold,
And revel 'mid her buds of gold,
When thou art seen no more!

Where'er I find thee, gentle flower,
Thou still art sweet and dear to me!
For I have known the cheerless hour,
Have seen the sunbeams cold and pale,
Have felt the chilling wintry gale,
And wept and shrunk like thee."

Hurdis says of the Snowdrop:—

" —— the pendulous flower,
That, drooping, dares unveil its modest charms,
E'en to the kiss of blossom-killing frost.
Pleased with her beauty, the tyrannic storm
Not mars her elegance with surly touch,
But wraps his snows around her beauteous head,
And names her his for ever. Lead the year,
Thou welcome harbinger of softer days!
Drop, which, more lovely than the winnow'd flake,
Which strives to hide thy charms, in the cold ear
Of Winter beauteous hang'st, and sham'st the fall
Most pure that veils thee, and extends around
Its candid drift in competition vain!"

Wordsworth never ceases to pour out the over-flowing treasures of his exhaustless mind upon his favourite flowers; he seems troubled with a plethora of thoughts all too good to be lost; and hence the Daisy, the Celandine, the

Primrose, and the Snowdrop are all honoured by three or four separate pieces; besides numerous allusions to them scattered through other works. He takes a hint from the Linnæan name, *Galanthus*, i.e., helmet-flower, to speak of the Snowdrop as

"—— frail Snowdrops that together cling,
And nod their helmets, smitten by the wing
Of many a furious whirl-blast sweeping by."

He more than once considers its white wintry aspect as a fitting emblem of hoary-headed age, and promises that when Spring has brought forth more gaudy flowers he will not

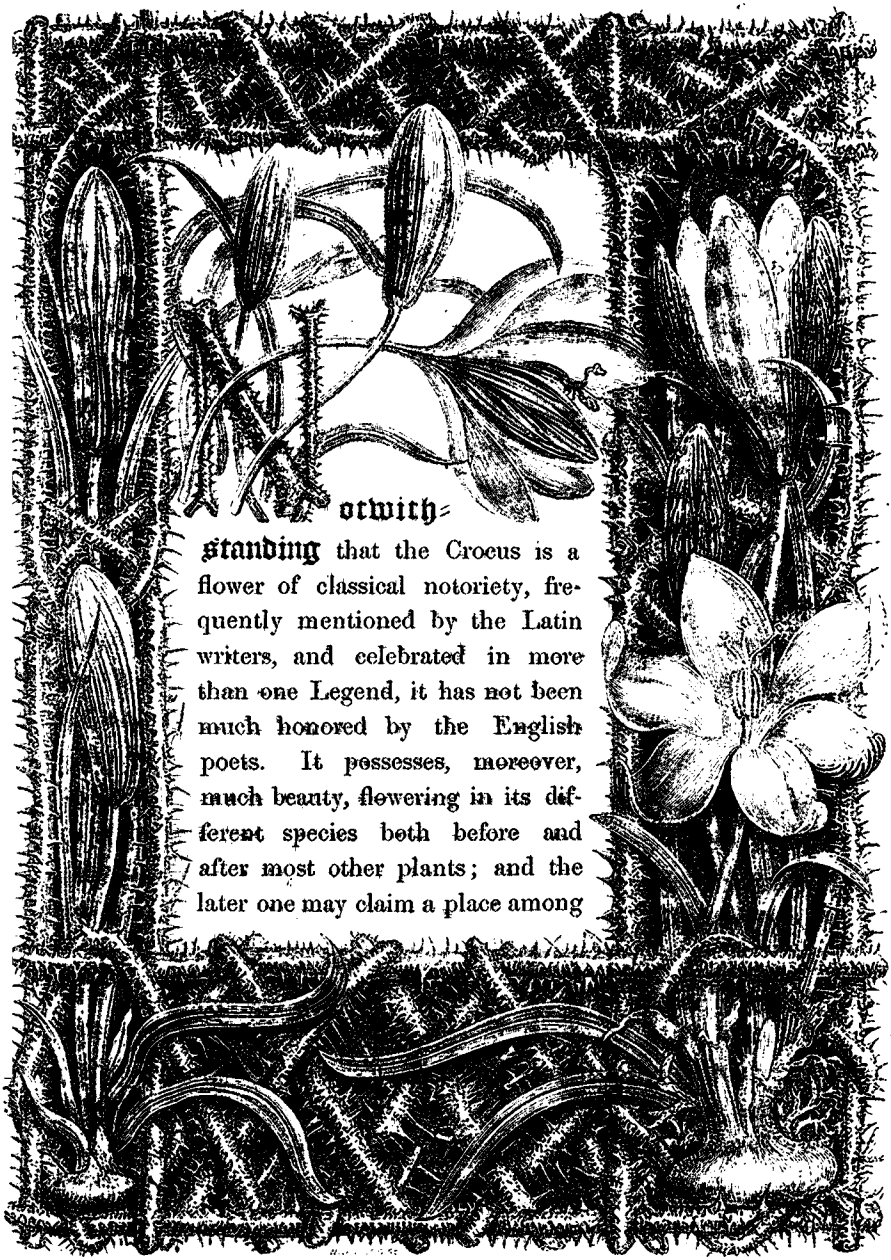
"then thy modest grace forget,
Chaste Snowdrop, venturous harbinger of Spring,
And pensive monitor of fleeting years!"

The Crocus.

CROCUS VERNUS.

"What time the sun the yellow Crocus woos,
Screen'd from the arrowy north."

ROGERS.



Notwithstanding that the Crocus is a flower of classical notoriety, frequently mentioned by the Latin writers, and celebrated in more than one Legend, it has not been much honored by the English poets. It possesses, moreover, much beauty, flowering in its different species both before and after most other plants; and the later one may claim a place among

the most common of our native wild flowers. It is, probably, as the classical plant, that Spenser speaks of it as

"Saffron sought for in Cilician soyle."

But it is as the well known ornament of our fields that Sir H. Wotton introduces it into his lively description of Spring, which we subjoin on account of its beautiful simplicity:—

"And now all Nature seem'd in love,
The lusty sap began to move;
New juice did stir th' embracing Vines,
And Birds had drawn their valentines;
The jealous Trout that low did lie,
Rose at a well dissembled fly;
There stood my friend with patient skill,
Attending of his trembling quill.
* * * *
The showers were short, the weather mild,
The morning fresh, the evening smiled.
* * * *
The fields and gardens were beset
With Tulips, Crocus, Violet;
And now, though late, the modest Rose,
Did more than half a blush disclose;
Thus all look'd gay, all full of cheer,
To welcome the new-livery'd year."

The Crocus can hardly be said to have thus gained a place in poetry; but when it once becomes established there, it is neither by virtue of its classical fame, nor of its native garniture of England's fertile meadows, but as the beautiful, various-coloured rival of the snowdrop in the Spring garden. Even in that character the notices of it are few and brief.

Milton selects it, for the rich variety of its colours, to form the mosaic of the "blissful bower" of our first parents:—

"—— underfoot the violet,
Crocus, and hyacinth, with rich inlay,
Broider'd the ground, more color'd than with stone
Of costliest emblem."

Stanley correctly describes it as

"The Crocus with his triple tongue of flame."

Thomson subsequently introduces it with the snowdrop, as one of the first flowers of Spring; and Savage follows his example:—

"Her golden head the Crocus rears;
The flowery tribe profuse and gay,
Spread to the soft, inviting ray."

It is also mentioned by Mason:—

"The Crocus glistening, with the morn's first tears."

And Blacklock:—

"In yellow glory let the Crocus shine."

Churchill is far from being complimentary to it when he places it by the side of the snowdrop:

"The coxcomb Crocus, flower of simple note,
Who by her side struts in a herald's coat."

But Mrs. Tighe, with a finer perception of the beauties of Nature, is more just to these brilliant children of the early Spring:—

"—— with richly mingling hues,
The gold and purple Crocus vie
To mock the pomp of majesty."

She is, moreover, the only modern author who has referred to its classical origin; and this she does very appropriately in the purely classical allegory of "Psyche:"—

"Still for his love the yellow Crocus pines."

Shelley, when traversing the classical ground of Italy, noticed the flower occupying its ancient site undisturbed, though successive generations of the self-styled Lords of Creation had struggled and fought above its head, and one after another sunk into the silent tomb, or left their unburied bones to nourish the flowers of Spring:—

"Were not the Crocuses that grew
Under that ilex tree,
As beautiful in scent and hue
As ever fed the bee?"

There is more of fancy than of truth in Hood's description. The noontide of Crocus-time needs no "cool libation:"—

"—— Saffron Crocus, in whose chalice bright
A cool libation, hoarded for the noon,
Is kept."

The snowdrop has robbed the Crocus of the pleasant associations which attach to the *first* flower of Spring. It comes, however, very kindly to decorate the dreary interval between the snowdrop and the primrose, and well deserves the

praise which Wordsworth has bestowed on a very inferior flower, the celandine:—

"Ere a leaf is on a bush,
In the time before the thrush
Has a thought about its nest,
Thou wilt come with half a call,
Spreading out thy glossy breast,
Like a careless prodigal;
Telling tales about the Sun,
When we've little warmth or none."

The Primrose.

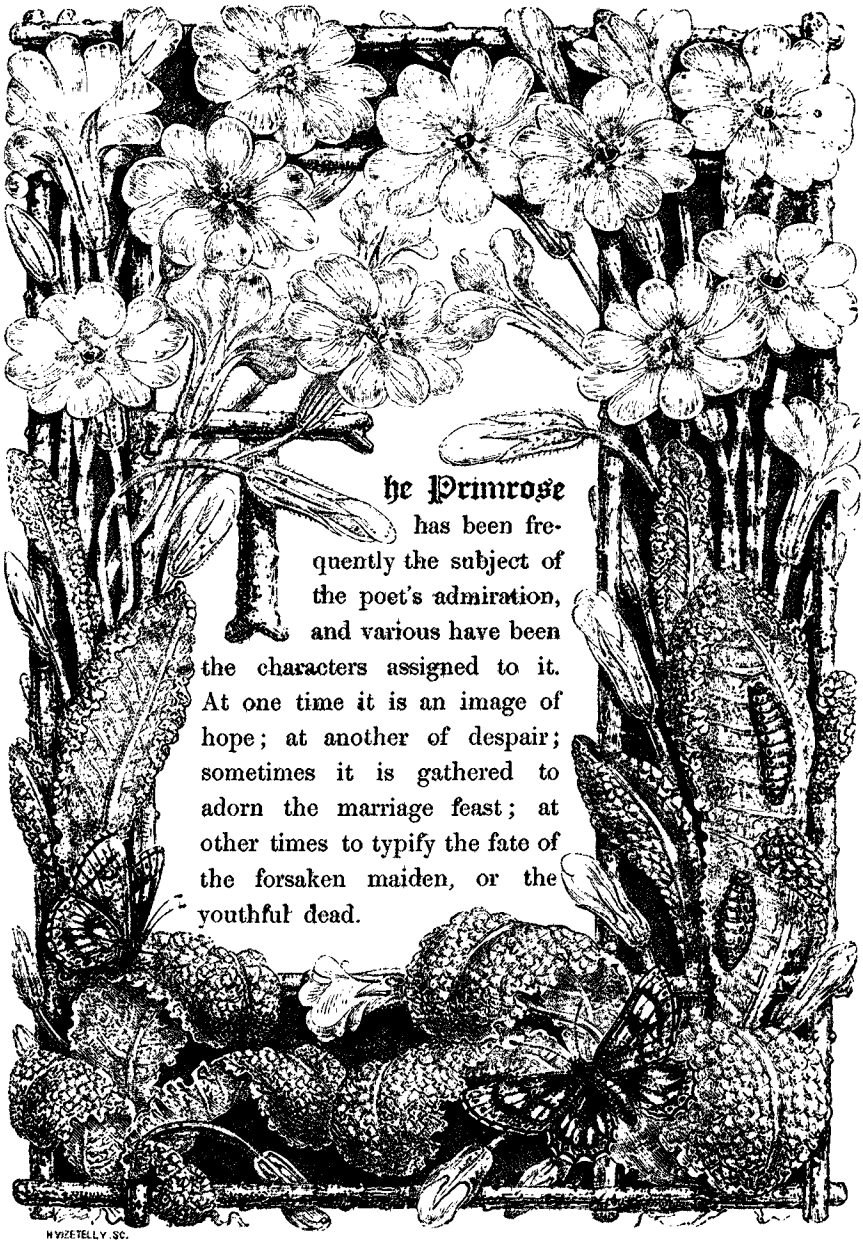
PRIMULA VULGARIS.

"Nature, new blossom'd, shed her odours round,
The dew-bent Primrose kiss'd the breeze-swept ground."

A. HILL.

"— Primroses gather'd at midnight,
By chilly-finger'd Spring."

KEATS.


The Primrose has been frequently the subject of the poet's admiration, and various have been the characters assigned to it. At one time it is an image of hope; at another of despair; sometimes it is gathered to adorn the marriage feast; at other times to typify the fate of the forsaken maiden, or the youthful dead.
H.VIZETELLY. SC.

Chaucer gives us a description of good old English jollity, in which the Primroses, and other flowers, were made to take a part. He is describing the Court of Love going a-Maying into the woods:—

"Eke eche at other threwe the flowrès bright,
The Primerose, the Violet, and the Gold;
So then as I beheld the royàl sight
My lady 'gan me suddenly behold,
And with a Truelove, * plitid many a fold,
She smote me through the very heart as blive—
And Venus yet I thank I am alive."

The word Primrose being a compound of prime and rose—early rose, or rose of the early Spring—Spenser sometimes spells and divides it according to its derivation, in order to denote the excellence of his mistress, whom he denominates

"—— the pride and Prime-rose of the rest,
Made by the Maker's self to be admired;"

and again, in the character of a husband lamenting the death of a young and beautiful wife:—

* *Truelove, i.e.* a six or four-leaved Primrose.

"Mine is the Prime-rose in the lowly shade;
Mine? Ah! not mine; amiss I mine did say:
Not mine, but His, which mine awhile her made
Mine to be His, with Him to live for aye.
O that so fair a flower so soon should fade,
And through untimely tempest fall away!

She fell away in her first age's spring,
Whilst yet her leaf was green, and fresh her rind,
And whilst her branch fair blossoms forth did bring;
She fell away against all course of kind."

As emblematic of purity, the Primrose is, however, equally appropriate to the bridal wreath; in which Spenser gives it a place by the side of the matronly Lily and princely Rose:—

"The virgin Lily, and the Primrose true,
With store of vermeil Roses,
To deck their bridegrooms' posies
Against the bridal day."

Drayton also assigns it the first place in the bridegroom's wreath:—

"The Primrose placing first, because that in the Spring
It is the first appears, then only flourishing;"

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and describes it as

"The Primrose that puts on the Spring."

For which reason Ben Jonson calls it

"The Spring's own spouse;"

and also,

"The glory of the Spring."

J. Fletcher likewise entitles it,

"Primrose, first-born child of Ver,
Merry Spring-time's harbinger,
With her bells dim."

Shakspere would almost appear to have adopted from Spenser the metaphor of the Primrose for a maiden death; and exquisitely beautiful are his few words on this pale flower:—

"—— pale Primroses,
That die unmarried, ere they can behold
Bright Phœbus in his strength, a malady
Most incident to maids."

Perhaps it was the pale yellow-green hue of the Primrose which suggested it as a fit type of the dying maiden, for on that account it was selected to deck the grave of Imogen:—

—— "thou shalt not lack
The flower that's like thy face, pale Primrose."

But the flowers when profusely adorning the wooded banks, as Shakspere had seen them in his native Warwickshire, afford, he tells us, appropriate seats for lovers, or for friends: thus,

Hermia to Helena:—

"And in the wood, where often you and I
Upon faint Primrose beds were wont to lie,
Emptying our bosoms of their counsel sweet;"

and again,

Venus to Adonis:—

"Love is a spirit all compact of fire;
Not gross to sink, but light, and will aspire.
Witness this Primrose bank whereon I lie;
These forceless flowers like sturdy trees support me."

But as ways of pleasantness are not always the safest for mortals to tread, Shakspere cautions youth against

"The Primrose path of dalliance,"

lest, mayhap, it should also prove

"The Primrose way to the everlasting bonfire."

The following lines on the Primrose, by Donne, are the first entire original composition devoted to a flower (save Chaucer's ballad to the Daisy), which we have met with. The meaning of the lines is rather obscure at the present day, when to most men, as to Peter Bell,

> "A Primrose by a river's brim,
> A yellow Primrose was to him—
> And it was nothing more;"

but when they were written they were perfectly intelligible. The Primrose occasionally varies the number of its petals from the natural number five, to four or six; and W. Browne tells us,

> "The Primrose, when with six leaves gotten grace,
> Maids as a *truelove* in their bosoms place."

Thus Donne walking on a hill profusely scattered with Primroses, seeks to find a truelove (*i. e.* a four or six leaved flower); but finding none with more or less than their proper number, he gives up the search, and concludes with a recommendation to ladies, not to desire too much perfection in a Truelove, nor be satisfied with less merit than a lover ought to possess:—

"Upon this Primrose hill
(Where, if Heav'n would distil
A shower of rain, each several drop might go
To his own Primrose, and grow manna so;
And where their form and their infinity
Make a terrestrial galaxy,
As the small stars do in the sky)
I walk to find a truelove, and I see
That 'tis not a mere woman that is she,
But must or more or less than woman be.

Yet know I not which flower
I wish, a six or four;
For should my truelove less than woman be,
She were scarce any thing; and then, should she
Be more than woman, she would get above
All thought of sex, and think to move
My heart to study her, and not to love:
Both these were monsters ——
Live, Primrose, then, and thrive
With thy true number five;
And, women, whom this flower doth represent,
With this mysterious number be content."

The brothers, Phineas and Giles Fletcher, have each the same pretty conceit on Primroses

and violets. Doubtless, when wandering through the lanes and fields of fertile Kent, in their boyhood, they had often called each other's attention to the fancy which they afterwards embodied in their poetry, the offspring of "very unripe years, almost childhood," before the glow of youth was dulled by contact with the world:—

"Th' engladden'd Spring, forgetful now to weep,
Began t' emblazon from her leavy bed;
The waking swallow broke her half-year's sleep,
And every bush lay deeply purpured
With violets; the wood's late wintry head
Wide flaming Primroses set all on fire."

G. FLETCHER.

Very similar is P. Fletcher's fancy:—

"—— when the flowers from winter tomb
Peep out again from their fresh mother's womb;
The Primrose lighted new, her flame displays,
And frights the neighbour hedge with fiery rays."

But he carries the quaint conceit still further:—

"The shepherds to the woody mount withdrew,
Where hillocks seats, shades yield a canopy;
Whose tops with violets dyed all in blue,
Might seem to make a little azure sky;

And that round hill, which their weak heads
maintain'd,
A lesser Atlas seem'd, whose neck sustain'd
The weight of all the heavens, which sore his
shoulders pain'd.

And here and there sweet Primrose scattered,
Spangling the blue, fit constellations make:
Some broadly flaming their fair colours spread;
Some others wink'd, as yet but half awake:
Fit were they plac'd, and set in order due:
Nature seem'd work'd by art, so lively true
A little heaven on earth in narrow space she
drew."

In another place he repeats the same image:—

"—— that Primrose there,
Which 'mongst those vi'lets sheds his golden hair,
Seems the Sun's little son, fix'd in his azure
sphere."

The idea has been imitated by J. Shirley:—

"—— violets,
Whose azure leaves do warm their naked stalks,
And Primroses, are scatter'd in the walks,
Whose pretty mixture in the ground declares
Another galaxy emboss'd with stars."

CAREW.

THE PRIMROSE.

"Ask me why I send you here
This firstling of the infant year?
Ask me why I send to you,
This Primrose all be-pearl'd with dew?
I straight will whisper in your ears,
The sweets of love are wash'd with tears.

Ask me why this flower does show
So yellow, green, and sickly too?
Ask me why the stalk is weak,
And bending, yet it doth not break?
I must tell you, these discover
What doubts and fears are in a lover."

Herrick slightly altered, without improving these lines, and published them as the coinage of his own brain; affording one, among many instances, of the impudence with which the elder poets pillaged from each other, without fear or remorse, and generally without reclamation. It is amusing to contrast the horror which such pilfering would occasion to a modern author, with the cool indifference with which it was formerly regarded. Now-a-days all the fearful machinery

of the Court of Chancery would be put in motion against the delinquent; then, not even a complaint was heard to guide us to the original author.

HERRICK.

HOW PRIMROSES CAME GREEN.*

"Virgins, time-past, known were these
Troubled with green-sicknesses;
Turn'd to flowers; still the hue,
Sickly girls, they bear of you."

TO PRIMROSES.

"Why do ye weep, sweet babes? Can tears
Speak grief in you,
Who were but born
Just as the modest morn
Teem'd her refreshing dew?
Alas! you have not known that shower
That mars a flower,
Nor felt the unkind
Breath of a blasting wind;
Nor are ye worn with years,
Or warp'd as we,
Who think it strange to see

* The Primrose was termed green, or yellow-green, by the poets of this period.

Such pretty flowers, like to orphans young,
To speak by tears before ye have a tongue.

Speak, whimp'ring younglings, and make known
The reason why
Ye droop and weep;
Is it for want of sleep,
Or childish lullaby?
Or that ye have not seen as yet
The violet?
Or brought a kiss
From that sweetheart to this?
No, no; this sorrow shown
By your tears shed,
Would have this lecture read,—
'That things of greatest, so of meanest worth,
Conceiv'd with grief are, and with tears brought forth.'"

Crashaw, addressing Mary Magdalene, "The Weeper," quaintly says,

"The dew no more will weep,
The Primrose's pale cheek to deck;
The dew no more will sleep
Nuzzled in the lily's neck;
Much rather would it be thy tear."

Milton generally invests the Primrose with a mournful character. He gives it no place in Paradise. On the contrary,

"The rathe Primrose that forsaken dies,"

is the most appropriate of the flowers which strew the bier of Lycidas; and the fair infant whose early death he celebrates, he metaphorically calls by the name of this flower:—

"O, fairest flower, no sooner born than blasted!
Soft silken Primrose, fading timelessly,
Summer's chief mourner, if thou hadst outlasted
Bleak Winter's force, that made thy blossom dry;
For he, being amorous, on that lovely dye
That did thy cheek envermeil, thought to kiss,
But killed, alas! and then bewail'd his fatal bliss!"

Shenstone forcibly suggests a truth, which many a painful lesson has taught to all who have mixed much with the world, without having the heart completely hardened. In an "Ode on Rural Elegance, addressed to the Countess of Somerset," he asks:—

"When deafen'd by the loud acclaim,
Which genius graced with rank obtains,
Could she not more delighted hear
Yon throstle chant the rising year?
Could she not spurn the wreaths of fame,
To crop the Primrose of the plains?
Does she not sweets in each fair valley find,
Lost to the sons of power, unknown to half mankind?"

In the same strain of practical wisdom are the following lines of Thomas Warton:—

"Beneath this stony roof reclined,
I soothe to peace my pensive mind;
And while, to shade my lowly cave,
Embowering elms their umbrage wave,
I scorn the gay, licentious crowd,
Nor heed the toys that deck the proud.
* * * * *
At morn I take my custom'd round,
To mark how buds yon shrubby mound!
And every opening Primrose count,
That timely paints my blooming mount."

Scarcely a poet but has loved

"The Primrose on the valley's side;"

LANGHORNE.

and delighted to wander where

"—— the hardy Primrose peeps
From the dark dell's entangled steeps;"

T. WARTON.

or where

"Oft the sight, on banks bestrewn with leaves,
The early Primrose' opening bud perceives;"

J. SCOTT.

or

"—— shaded by the humble thorn,
The lingering Primrose blows;"

MICKLE.

or to

"—— pensive pace along,
And catch the distant shepherd's song,
Or brush from herbs the early dew,
Or the rising Primrose view;"

GRAINGER.

and, poet or no poet, every one feels

"How pleasant the banks and green valleys below,
Where wild in the woodlands the Primroses blow!"

BURNS.

Burns prettily calls "The Primrose down the brae,"

"The firstling o' the year."

Hence he says,

"The haunt o' Spring 's the Primrose brae;"

and for the like reason he has introduced it as an emblem of young first-love into one of those exquisite songs, of which Sir W. Scott justly said, each one contains the matter of a hundred love-tales:—

"My Chloris, mark how green the groves,
The Primrose banks how fair!
The balmy gales awake the flowers,
And wave thy flaxen hair!

* * * * * *

These wild-wood flowers I 've pu'd, to deck
That spotless breast o' thine;
The courtier's gems may witness love—
But 'tis na love like *mine*!"

Cowper, when forcibly contrasting the wisdom to be gained from communion with the works of God, with the knowledge obtained from books (too often written to deceive), avails himself of what his friend Hurdis calls

"——the meek
And soft-eyed Primrose,"

for an illustration:—

"But trees, and rivulets whose rapid course
Defies the check of Winter, haunts of deer,
And sheep-walks populous with bleating lambs,
And lanes in which the Primrose, ere her time
Peeps through the moss that clothes the Hawthorn root,
Deceive no student. Wisdom there, and Truth,
Not shy, as in the world, and to be won
By slow solicitation, seize at once
The roving thought, and fix it on themselves."

Many tributes have been paid to the memory of the melancholy-minded H. K. White, whose good fortune it was to find an early grave; but of his character and fate no sketch has been given equal to his own for beauty and accuracy:—

"But yet a few there be—too soon o'ercast!—
Who shrink unhappy from the adverse blast,
And woo the first bright gleam which breaks the gloom,
To gild the silent slumbers of the tomb!
So in these shades the early Primrose blows,
Too soon deceived by suns and melting snows;
So falls untimely on the desert waste,
Its blossoms withering in the northern blast!"

H. K. WHITE.

TO AN EARLY PRIMROSE.

"Mild offspring of a dark and sullen sire,
Whose modest form so delicately fine,
Was nursed in whirling storms,
And cradled in the winds;
Thee, when young Spring first question'd Winter's sway,
And dared the sturdy blusterer to the fight,
Thee on this bank he threw
To mark his victory!

In this low vale, the promise of the year,
Serene thou openest to the nipping gale,
Unnoticed and alone,
Thy tender elegance.
So virtue blooms, brought forth amid the storms
Of chill adversity: in some lone walk
Of life she rears her head,
Obscure and unobserved;
While every bleaching breeze that on her blows,
Chastens her spotless purity of breast,
And hardens her to bear
Serene the ills of life!"

How beautifully does Shelley avail himself of the Primrose to teach that Death is but the path to Life:—

"Death is a gate of dreariness and gloom,
That leads to azure isles, and beaming skies
Of happy regions of eternal hope.
Though storms may break the Primrose on its stalk,
Though frosts may blight the freshness of its bloom,

Yet Spring's awakening breath will woo the earth,
To feed with kindliest dews its favourite flower,
That blooms in mossy banks and darksome glens,
Lighting the greenwood with its sunny smile.
Fear not then, Spirit, Death's disrobing hand!"

Mrs. Hemans truly and beautifully says of herself:—

"O Nature! thou didst rear me for thine own,
With thy free singing birds and mountain brooks;
Feeding my thoughts in Primrose-haunted nooks,
With fairy fantasies and wood-dreams lone."

And therefore we confidently accept the invitation of one who is so well entitled to speak of the scenes of Nature amid "England's Primrose-meadow Paths:"—

"Come to the woods, in whose mossy dells
A light all made for the poet dwells;
A light, colour'd softly by tender leaves,
Whence the Primrose a mellower glow receives."

Another of Nature's admirers would also tempt us to her haunts; and let the worldly man believe what is here said, for he will find it *literally* true:—

"There's gowd in the breast of the Primrose pale,
And siller in every blossom;
There's riches galore in the breeze of the vale,
And health in the wild wood's bosom.
Then come, my love, at the hour of joy,
When warbling birds sing o'er us:
Sweet Nature for us has no alloy,
And the world is all before us."

BOGG.

The Cowslip.

PRIMULA OFFICINALIS.

The Oxlip.

PRIMULA ELATIOR.

PRIMULA OFFICINALIS.

"Bowing adorers of the gale,
Ye Cowslips delicately pale,
Upraise your loaded stems,
Unfold your cups in splendours—speak!
Who deck'd you with that ruddy streak,
And gilt your golden gems?"

CRABE.

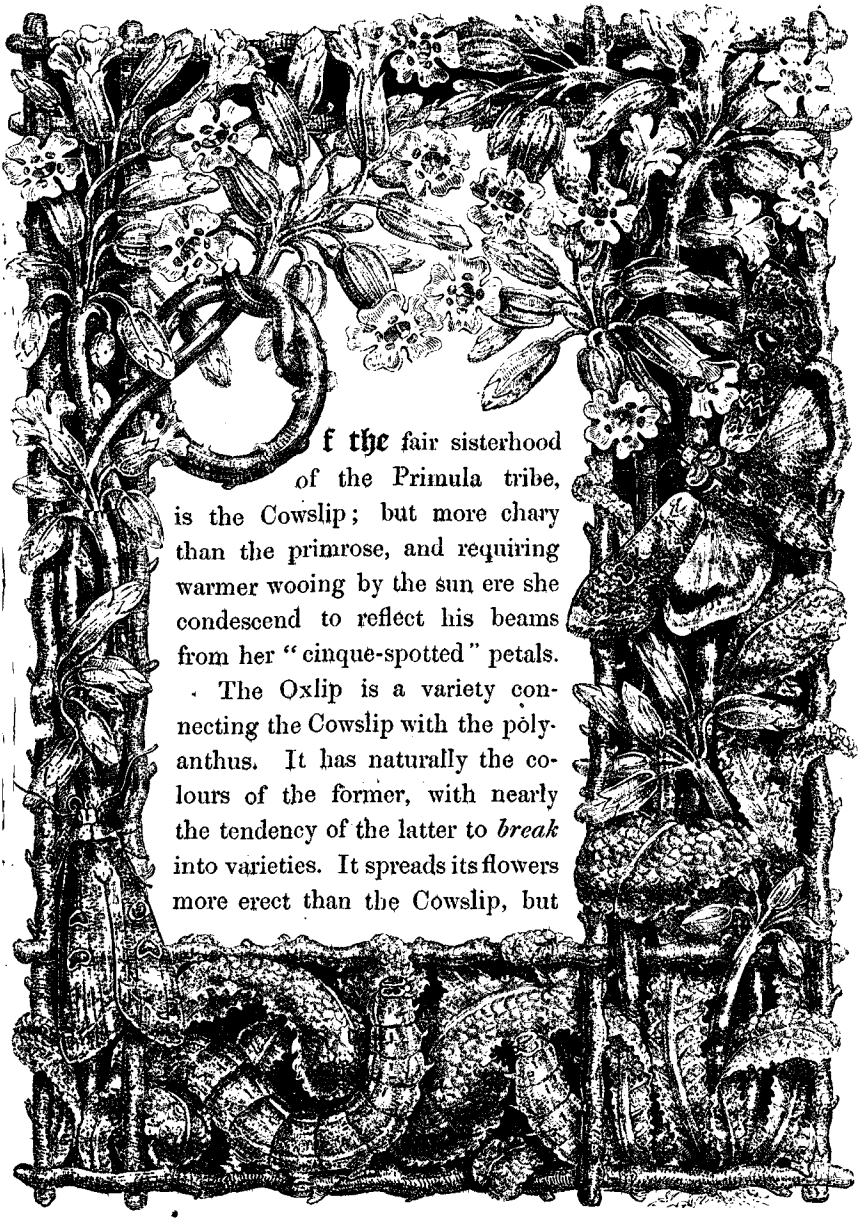
"Pale Cowslips, meet for maiden's early bier."

MRS. HEMANS.

PRIMULA ELATIOR.

"I know a bank where the wild thyme blows,
Where Oxlips, and the nodding violet grows."

SHAKSPERE.



Of the fair sisterhood of the Primula tribe, is the Cowslip; but more chary than the primrose, and requiring warmer wooing by the sun ere she condescend to reflect his beams from her "cinque-spotted" petals.

The Oxlip is a variety connecting the Cowslip with the polyanthus. It has naturally the colours of the former, with nearly the tendency of the latter to *break* into varieties. It spreads its flowers more erect than the Cowslip, but

less compact and upright than the polyanthus. On a transient view it most resembles the Cowslip, and is consequently undistinguished from it by common observers, who regard it only as "a very fine Cowslip." But the Oxlip is something more than that, and its rich yellow petals, with their bright crimson eyes, rearing themselves on a strong stem above the herbage, well entitle it to Shakspere's epithet,

"—— bold Oxlips;"

and to J. Fletcher's fanciful description of

"Oxlips in their cradles growing."

Drayton places the two flowers together:—

"The Cowslip then they couch, and the Oxlip for her meet."

Cowslips are more frequently honoured by the notice of Shakspere than the Oxlip. They attend the court of the Fairy Queen, and lend it a right royal aspect. They are her guards, her gentlemen-pensioners, with their glittering gold and scarlet-spotted coats and tall lordly port:—

"The Cowslips tall her pensioners be,
In their gold coats spots you see;

Those be rubies, fairy favours,
In those freckles live their savours.
I must go seek some dew-drops here,
And hang a pearl in every Cowslip's ear."

In Ariel's beautiful rapture on the recovery of liberty, the Cowslip is made the delicate being's peculiar abode:—

"Where the bee sucks, there lurk I,
In a Cowslip's bell I lie,
There I couch when owls do cry;
On the bat's back I do fly
After summer merrily:
Merrily, merrily, shall I live now,
Under the blossom that hangs on the bough."

Shakspere has another allusion to "the freckled Cowslip," in the soliloquy of the villanous Iachimo, the most thoroughly vile of Shakspere's characters, for he is vile without a cause, save the mere love of villany. Eager to inspire Posthumus with a belief in Imogen's dishonour, he notes

"—— on her left breast
A mole cinque-spotted, like the crimson drops
I' the bottom of a Cowslip."

Thus the Cowslip, though not very frequently mentioned by Shakspere, has good ground to boast of much honour at his hands. To be a gentleman-pensioner in the court of the Queen of the Fairies, to be a couch for the most delicate of spirits, and like a mole on the breast of one of the purest and loveliest of Shakspere's women, are no mean marks of favour. They are honours for which every flower of the field might gladly contend.

Drayton, in his amusing little tale, "Nymphidia; the Court of Fairy," introduces the Cowslip as a bower for the Fairy Queen:—

"And for the queen a fitting bower,
(Quoth he) is that fair Cowslip flower,
On Hip-cut hill that groweth:
In all your train there's not a fay,
That ever went to gather May,
But she hath made it in her way,
The tallest there that groweth."

We hardly blame the fanciful division of Daisies into "Day's eyes," but when Ben Jonson turns Cowslips into "Lips of Cows," we cannot but feel that he carries the conceit beyond the

rules of good taste. We are more startled than pleased to find the learned Ben giving way to so childish a distortion of words, though we might smile at it in an inferior poet.

We are almost obliged to prefer Carew's barefaced adaptation from *Shakspere*:—

"—— the blushes of the morn appear,
And now she hangs her pearly store,
Robb'd from the eastern shore,
I' th' Cowslip's bell and rose's ear;"

and certainly would rather wander with Browne when he

"Takes his step towards the flowery valleys,
Where Zephyr with the *Cowslip hourly dallies*;"

or seek some bank where *grow*

"—— the purpled hyacinths, and near to them
The yellow Cowslip bends its tender stem."

CHAMBERLAYNE.

Herrick, the most simple-hearted of poets, leads our thoughts to the days of happy, careless childhood, by reminding us of the time when we used to manufacture Cowslip balls and fling them at our playmates in boisterous sport. Such amuse-

ment was the relic of a game alluded to in the following lines, from which (coupled with evidence from other sources) we perceive that our ancestors carried the sports of childhood into a late period of life, and that young men and maidens were not ashamed to recreate themselves with innocent games:—

"I call, I call! Who do ye call?
The maids to catch this Cowslip ball;
But since these Cowslips fading be,
Troth, leave the flowers, and maids take me.
Yet if that neither you will do,
Speak but the word, and I 'll take you."

The same custom is alluded to in his lines "To Meadows:"—

"Ye have been fresh and green;
Ye have been fill'd with flowers;
And ye the walks have been,
Where maids have spent their hours.

Ye have beheld how they
With wicker arks did come,
To kiss and bear away
The richer Cowslips home."

It is singular that Milton should have *introduced the gay Cowslip among funereal flowers*, as,

" Cowslips wan, that hang the pensive head;
And every flower that sad embroidery wears."

Moreover, we must deny the appropriateness of the epithet "wan" to the "gold-coated Cowslip." The allusion to the Cowslip in *Sabrina's* exquisite song is well known, though we cannot therefore omit it:—

" By the rushy-fringed bank,
Where grows the willow and the osier dank,
My sliding chariot stays,
Thick set with agate, and the azure sheen
Of Turkish blue, and emerald green,
That in the channel strays:
Whilst from off the waters fleet,
Thus I set my printless feet,
O'er the Cowslip's velvet head,
That bends not as I tread."

Milton likewise associates the sister-flowers as emblems of May:—

"Now the bright morning-star, day's harbinger,
Comes dancing from the east, and leads with her
The flowery May, who from her green lap throws
The yellow Cowslip and the pale Primrose."

The Cowslip has not been the subject of such lengthened strains as the primrose; nevertheless we find several brief notices of it among our poets. The Countess of Winchelsea describes a spot

"—— where the sleepy Cowslip shelter'd grows."

Prior praises it with a town-bred comparison:—

"The Cowslip smiles, in brighter yellow dress'd
Than that which veils the nubile virgin's breast."

Gay simply says,

"Yellow Cowslips paint the smiling field."

Somerville,

"The tufted Cowslips breathe their faint perfume."

J. Thomson invites to repose

"—— where Cowslips hang
The dewy head, where purple violets lurk,
With all the lowly children of the shade."

And Langhorne likewise tempts us to a spot

"—— where droops,
In tender beauty, its fair spotted bells
The Cowslip."

W. Thompson correctly describes the haunt of the nightingale, which, it has been observed, prefers the dingles where the Cowslip grows profusely:—

"—— the nightingale's harmonious woe,
In dewy even-tide, when Cowslips droop
Their sleepy heads, and languish in the breeze."

Chatterton says,

"The nesh young Cowslip bendeth with the dew."

Mickle,

"Modest Cowslips deck the streamlet's side;"

and—

"Wild by the banks the bashful Cowslips spread.'

Smart wishes indolently to recline

"Near some Cowslip-painted mead;
There let me doze out the dull hours,
And under me let Flora spread
A sofa of her softest flowers."

He also gives a fuller description than the poets of his time usually condescend to bestow on flowers:—

"Cowslips, like topazes, that shine
Close by the silver serpentine,
Rude rustics, which assert the bowers,
Amidst the educated flowers."

Thomas Warton tempts us

"—— to the forest-fringed vale,
Where Cowslips, clad in mantle meek,
Nod their tall heads to breezes weak."

So that it is not quite true, as the same poet observes, that

"—— the Cowslip paints the green
With unregarded grace."

Blair has a beautiful simile when summing up with a masterly hand the various tenants of the grave, amongst whom is the

" —— long-demurring maid,
Whose lonely unappropriated sweets
Smiled like yon knot of Cowslips on the cliff,
Not to be come at by the willing hand."

Hurdis fancifully says,

"The love-sick Cowslip which her head inclines
To hide a bleeding heart."

But Mrs. C. Smith more naturally describes,

" —— rich in vegetable gold,
From calyx pale the freckled Cowslip born,
Receives in jasper cups the fragrant dews of morn."

Mrs. Hemans likewise mentions

" —— the rich crimson spots that dwell
'Midst the gold of the Cowslip's perfumed cell."

Certainly there is no flower so pregnant with early reminiscences as the Cowslip. From tenderest infancy to hoariest age it is ever a welcome visitant, because it brings to each scenes of past, or of present, happiness. The child revels among its sweets, while the adult feels that

"It is the same! it is the very scent,
That bland, yet luscious, meadow-breathing sweet,
Which I remember when my childish feet,
With a new life's rejoicing spirit, went
Through the deep grass with wild flowers richly blent,
That smiled to high heav'n from their verdant seat—
But it brings not to thee such joy complete;
Thou canst not see, as I do, how we spent
In blessedness, in sunshine, and in flowers,
The beautiful noon; and then how seated round
The odorous pile, upon the shady ground—
A boyish group—we laugh'd away the hours,
Plucking the yellow blooms for future wine,
While o'er us play'd a mother's smile divine."

W. HOWITT.

The Violet.

VIOLA ODORATA.

" The Violet enchants the scent,
When early in the spring she breathes,"

RABINGTON.

" Joyous and far shall our wanderings be,
As the flight of birds o'er the glittering sea;
To the woods, to the dingles where Violets blow,
We will bear no memory of earthly woe."

HEMANS.

The Violet is almost as great a favourite with the poets as the rose. There are few who have not mentioned it; and the character usually assigned to it is that of modest worth.

It was no less admired by the Greek and Latin writers; and perhaps, like the Rose, it owes as much of its mediæval fame to this circumstance, as to the real appreciation of it by the majority of our poets. The great names in poetry are, however, exceptions; and we shall see that

some of the greatest have paid their highest tributes to this humble but sweet-scented flower.

Chaucer's notice of it is very brief but expressive. He terms it

"—— the Violet all newe;"

and this epithet had a much greater force than is now attributed to the word new, being then made use of to signify pure, fresh, untainted as a newly-created being.

The exceeding beauty of the poetical remains of Sir Walter Raleigh excites deep regret that they are so few. In originality and depth of thought, in sweetness and harmony, some of them equal any composition in the language, and well entitle him to be called "the summer nightingale;" a name given him by his friend Spenser. There is much delicacy of sentiment in "The Shepherd's Address to the Flowers:"—

"Sweet Violets, Love's paradise, that spread
Your gracious odours, which you couched bear
Within your paley faces,
Upon the gentle wing of some calm breathing wind,
That plays amidst the plain,

If by the favour of propitious stars you gain
Such grace, as in my lady's bosom place to find,
Be proud to touch those places!
And when her warmth your moisture forth doth wear,
Whereby her dainty parts are sweetly fed,
Your honours of the flow'ry meads, I pray,
You pretty daughters of the earth and sun,
With mild and heavenly breathing straight display
My bitter sighs, that have my heart undone."

Violets may justly boast themselves the favourites of Shakspere. They seem to have been held by him in as high estimation as Chaucer held the Daisy; each of those great poets appearing to have intentionally selected one of the symbols of simplicity and modesty for the object of his highest regard. When Shakspere would express superlative excellence, the Violet is his usual emblem.

Thus Venus, lamenting Adonis, says, he was so lovely that

"When he lived, his breath and beauty set
Gloss on the rose, smell to the Violet;"

notwithstanding the scent of the latter is so delicious that

"To throw a *perfume on the Violet*
Is wasteful and ridiculous excess."

The pre-eminence of the Violet, above all other earthly things, is thus beautifully expressed:—

"—— Violets, dim,
But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes,*
Or Cytherea's breath."

When the Duchess of Aumerle inquires of her son who are the chief men of the new times, she poetically asks,

"—— Who are the Violets now
That strew the green lap of the new come Spring?"

Violets are the surviving emblems of the angelic spotlessness of Ophelia:—

* Ιοβλεφαρος (having Violet eyelids), was a complimentary phrase among the Greeks, in allusion to the still existing practice of darkening the eyelids with kohl, in order to increase the lustre and expression of the eyes. The very appropriate manner in which Shakspere avails himself of this classical term is one of the numerous proofs of his intimate acquaintance with the classics.

" —— Lay her i' the earth;
And from her fair and unpolluted flesh
May Violets spring!"

Ophelia herself tenderly connects the death of her father with their departure:—

" There's a daisy; I would give you some Violets,
But they wither'd all when my father died."

Belisarius, seeking words to express his admiration of his adopted sons, passionately exclaims,

" O! thou goddess,
Thou divine Nature, how thyself thou blazon'st
In these two princely boys! They are as gentle
As zephyrs blowing beneath the Violet,
Not wagging his sweet head; and yet as rough,
Their royal blood enchaf'd, as is the rudest wind
That by the top doth take the mountain pine
And make him stoop to the vale."

Music, as it floats on the wings of the air, is, with most expressive beauty, compared to the perfume of Violets borne to the sense:—

"O, it came o'er my ear like the sweet South
That breathes upon a bank of Violets,
Stealing and giving odour."

Boyish love is said to be

"A Violet in the youth of primy Nature,
Forward, not permanent; sweet, not lasting;
The perfume and suppliance of a minute—
No more."

Violet-banks are the haunt of fairies:—

"Where oxlips and the nodding Violet grow
There sleeps Titania, some time of the night."

On "blue-veined Violets" Venus and Adonis also repose; and they are among the adopted flowers of personified Spring:—

"Daisies pied, and Violets blue,
And lady-smocks all silver-white,
And cuckoo-buds of yellow hue,
Do paint the meadows with delight."

The only instance in which Shakspere imparts to the Violet the funereal character, with which many other poets have invested it, is when *he describes* Marina seeking

" the yellows, blues,
The purple Violets and marigolds,"

to lay upon the grave of her nurse. In one of his Sonnets he thus moralizes on the shortness of life :—

" When I behold the Violet past prime ——
Then of thy beauty do I question make,
That thou among the wastes of time must go,
Since sweets and beauties do themselves forsake,
And die as fast as they see others grow."

And in another Sonnet he thus accuses it :—

The forward Violet thus did I chide ;—
'Sweet thief, whence didst thou steal thy sweet that smells,
If not from my love's breath? The purple pride,
Which on thy soft cheek, for complexion, dwells,
In my love's veins thou hast too grossly dyed.'"

Ben Jonson selected the Violet as an appropriate flower to be associated with the primrose

in doing honour to the "Anniversary of Pan;" a May festival, in which the resuscitation of Nature from the death-like sleep of Winter is celebrated:—

"Drop, drop your Violets, change your hues,
Now red, now pale, as lovers use,
And in your death go out as well,
As when you lived unto the smell;
That from your odour all may say,
This is the shepherd's holiday."

The primrose was fitly chosen because she was "the Spring's own spouse," and the Violet because it is the favourite offspring of Zephyrus, the fabled husband of Flora:—

"The winds are sweet and gently blow,
But Zephyrus, no breath they know,
The father of the flowers;
By him the virgin Violets live,
And every plant doth odours give
As new as are the hours."

Phineas Fletcher also introduces it as the flower most fitting to represent the recurrence of *Spring*:—

"The flowers that frighten'd with sharp Winter's
dread,

Retire into their mother Tellus' womb,
Yet in the Spring, in troops new mustered,
Peep out again from their unfrozen tomb:
The early Violet will fresh arise,
And, spreading his flower'd purple to the skies,
Boldly the little elf the Winter's spite defies."

SIR HENRY WOTTON.

TO HIS MISTRESS THE QUEEN OF BOHEMIA.

"You Violets, that first appear,
By your pure purple mantles known,
Like the proud virgins of the year,
As if the Spring were all your own,
What are you when the rose is blown?

So when my mistress shall be seen,
In form and beauty of her mind;
By virtue first, then choice, a Queen!
Tell me if she were not design'd
Th' eclipse and glory of her kind?"

The pastorals of W. Browne abound with more lovely gem-like pictures of rural life than the works of most other English poets. But they are at once the beauty and the defect of *his poems. Their very individuality*, and their

constant recurrence, so mar the interest of the composition as a whole, that it is only in selections that any of his works will ever be perused by the generality of readers. In the present instance we have one of these truthful pictures:—

"As some wayfaring man passing a wood,
Whose waving top hath long a sea-mark stood,
Goes jogging on, and in his mind nought hath,
But how the primrose finely strew the path,
Or sweetest Violets lay down their heads
At some tree's root on mossy feather beds."

So again we have another picture of a rustic bank, such as may be seen under almost any shady hedgerow in the Spring:—

"Roget, droop not, see the Spring
Is the earth enamelling;——
See the primrose sweetly set
By the much-loved Violet,
All the banks do sweetly cover,
As they would invite a lover
With his lass to see their dressing,
And to grace them by their pressing."

The commentators on Shakspere have been much puzzled by the epithet, "happy lowlie

down," applied to the man of humble station, in Henry IV., and have proposed to read "lowly *clown*," *or to divide the phrase* into "low lie down;" but the following line from Browne clearly proves "lowly down" to be the correct term, for he uses it in precisely the same sense:—

"The humble Violet, that lowly down,
Salutes the gay nymphs as they trimly pass."

Perhaps of all the mad conceits which ever sprang from the brain of a poet, the following strange fancy of Herrick is the maddest:—

HOW VIOLETS CAME BLUE.

"Love on a day (wise poets tell)
Some time in wrangling spent,
Whether the Violets should excel
Or she, in sweetest scent.
But Venus having lost the day,
Poor girls, she fell on you;
And beat ye so (as some dare say)
Her blows did make ye blue."

We see that Herrick is half ashamed of this odd notion, and throws the onus of its creation

on that admirable invention, to save the reputation of a story-teller, an *on dit:* "wise poets tell," and "some dare say," exonerates the author from the blame of having himself engendered so ridiculous an absurdity. Of all the poets, however, that have sung of flowers, Herrick is best entitled to play such a freak; for to none are they indebted for so many beautiful eulogiums. Even the Violets would forgive the author of the following lines almost any liberty which at another time he might take with their names:—

TO VIOLETS.

"Welcome, Maids of Honour,
You do bring
In the Spring,
And wait upon her.

She has virgins many,
Fresh and fair;
Yet you are
More sweet than any.

Ye 're the maiden posies,
And so grac'd,
To be plac'd,
'Fore damask roses.

Yet though thus respected,
By and by
Ye do lie,
Poor girls, neglected."

AN EPITAPH UPON A CHILD.

"Virgins promis'd, when I died,
That they would each primrose-tide,
Duly, morn and ev'ning, come,
And with flowers dress my tomb.
Having promis'd, pay your debts,
Maids, and here strew Violets."

HABINGTON.

TO CASTARA.

"Why should you fear to melt away in death?
May we but die together! When beneath
In a cool vault we sleep, the world will prove
Religious, and call it the shrine of love.
There, when o' the wedding eve some beauteous maid,
Suspicious of the faith of man, hath paid
The tribute of her vows, o' th' sudden she
Two Violets sprouting from the tomb will see;
And cry out, 'Ye sweet emblems of their zeal
Who live below, sprang ye up to reveal

The story of our future joys, how we
The faithful patterns of their love shall be?
If not; hang down your heads oppress'd with dew,
And I will weep and wither hence with you.'"

Habington, in the description of his mistress, whom he celebrates under the name of "Castara," furnishes the original of a favourite simile of several modern poets:—

"Like the Violet which, alone,
Prospers in some happy shade,
My Castara lives unknown,
To no looser eye betray'd;
For she's to herself untrue,
Who delights i' th' public view."

So also, for himself, he preferred to noisy pomp the seclusion of

"The Violet, purple senator,"

FANSHAWE.

when

"As half fearing to be seen,
Prettily her leaves between
Peeps the Violet, pale to see
That her virtues slighted be:"—

WITHER.

"I'd rather like the Violet grow,
Unmark'd i' th' shaded vale,
Than on the hill those terrors know
Are breath'd forth by an angry gale;
There is more pomp above, more sweet below."

A similar emulation of the humble abode of

"——— Violets,
Whose azure leaves do warm their naked stalks,"

is exhibited by Shirley:—

"But I would see myself appear
Within the Violet's drooping head,
On which a melancholy tear
The discontented morn had shed."

Of Christian poets, Milton alone has entered fully into the spirit and poetry of the ancient mythology, without polluting his verse with the grossness and indelicacies with which more vulgar *minds, ancient and modern,* have associated it. He saw in that mythology an inexhaustible mine of the sublimest poetry, and he wisely availed himself of it to adorn his verse. The *Song to Echo,* in Comus, is one of the most *beautiful* examples of his clear perception of

the power of adaptation to modern scenery, inherent in the classical mythology. The scene is truly English: the moon-light, the rippling brook, the violet-embroidered vale, the overhanging rock where Echo lives unseen, the love-lorn nightingale, are all known to the lover of our rural scenery; yet he feels, at the same time, irresistibly compelled to believe that in that spot, where oft he has wandered alone to hear the nightingale, dwells one whom his less ambitious imagination never before suspected to be a sharer in his delights. So appropriate is Echo to the scene, so appropriate the scene to Echo!—

"Sweet Echo, sweetest nymph, that livest unseen
Within thy airy shell,
By slow meander's margin green,
And in the Violet-embroider'd vale,
Where the love-lorn nightingale
Nightly to thee her sad song mourneth well."

Before quitting Milton, we must not omit to notice that

"—— the glowing Violet"

is one of the "flowers worthy of Paradise," and twice introduced within its sacred limits.

Of the artificial town-bred wit, of the age in which Cowley lived, a better proof could not be desired than the following couplet:—

"The Violet, Spring's little *infant*, stands
Girt in purple *swaddling bands!*"

and as a further proof how little was then known of flowers, we may quote Akenside, who, adopting Virgil's epithet, *pallens*, for the white Violet, applies it to the Violet-coloured ray of the rainbow, of which he says,

"Of colours changing from the splendid rose,
To the *pale* Violet's dejected hue!"

But Thomson more correctly describes

"—— the Violet *darkly* blue."

By the time Langhorne wrote, a little more knowledge of Nature began to be exhibited; and however tame his description of the Violet, it can be read with more patience than the admired Cowley's ridiculous fancy:—

"This modest flower, of humble hue,
That boasts no depth of glowing dyes,
Array'd in unbespangled blue,
The simple clothing of the skies—

The Violet, that those banks beneath,
Hides from thy scorn its modest head,
Shall fill the air with fragrant breath,
When thou art in thy dusty bed."

LANGHORNE.

THE VIOLET.

"Shelter'd from the blight, ambition,
Fatal to the pride of rank,
See me in my low condition,
Laughing on the tufted bank.

On my robes, for emulation,
No variety 's imprest:
Suited to an humble station,
Mine 's an unembroider'd vest."

A very sweet stanza in the early editions of Gray's well-known "Elegy," was subsequently omitted, "because he thought it was too long a parenthesis at the close;" and it is therefore unknown to many on whose memory the rest of the Elegy is indelibly imprinted. Let them add the lines which the too fastidious author rejected. They were originally introduced after the stanza which immediately precedes the epitaph:—

"There scatter'd oft, the earliest of the year,
By hands unseen, are showers of Violets found;
The redbreast loves to build and warble there,
And little footsteps lightly print the ground."

Such a quiet, happy resting-place, under the canopy of heaven, was all that Beattie's good hermit coveted:—

"Mine be the breezy hill that skirts the down,
Where a green grassy turf is all I crave,
With here and there a Violet bestrown,
Fast by a brook, or fountain's murmuring wave;
And many an evening sun shine sweetly on my grave."

Modern poets have delighted to fancy themselves reposing where

"Violets bathe in the weet o' the morn;"

BURNS.

or where

"—— beds of Violets blooming mid the trees,
Load with waste fragrance the nocturnal breeze;"

H. K. WHITE.

or diligently searching for

"Fast-fading Violets cover'd *up in* leaves,"

in shady woods,

"—— where to pry aloof
Atween the pillars of the sylvan roof,
Would be to find where Violet buds were nestling;"

KEATS.

and yet 'tis still cold when March Violets are blowing, and not quite fitting weather to tempt the pleasures of slumber on

"Violet banks where sweet dreams brood."

SHELLEY.

Of the colour of the Violet, Shelley says,

"As a Violet's gentle eye
Gazes on the azure sky,
Until its hue grows like what it beholds;"

and its perfume he compares to music, the sound of which is

"As the scent of a Violet, wither'd up,
Which grew by the brink of a silver lake,
When the hot noon has dried its dewy cup,
And mist there was none its thirst to slake,
And the Violet lay dead, while the odour flew
On the wings of the wind o'er the waters blue."

Sr Walter Scott gives the Violet pre-eminence among wild flowers: —

"The Violet in her greenwood bower,
Where birchen boughs with hazels mingle,
May boast itself the fairest flower
In glen, in copse, or forest dingle."

L. E. L. says, that she had a particular penchant for

"—— nun-like Violets, by the wind betrayed;"
HEMANS.

because they constituted one of her earliest pleasures. She has spoken of both kinds in her poetry,—the white and the blue; but seems undecided which to prefer for sweetness:—

"I know the breath of the Violet well,—
The white and the azure Violet—
But I know not which is the sweetest yet."

We have quoted from Habington what appears to be the original of the following similes, comparing modest sweetness to a Violet:—

"As thro' the hedgerow shade the Violet steals,
And the sweet air its modest leaf reveals;

Her softer charms, but by their influence known,
Surprise all hearts, and mould them to her own."

ROGERS.

So likewise Moore says of Nama and her angel-lover:—

" —— humble in their earthly lot,
As is the way-side Violet,
That shines unseen, and were it not
For its sweet breath would be forgot."

Wordsworth has a like metaphor from

" —— the sweet-breathed Violet of the shade
Discover'd, in its own despite, to sense
Of mortals;"

to which he compares Lucy, who "dwelt beside the springs of Dove:"—

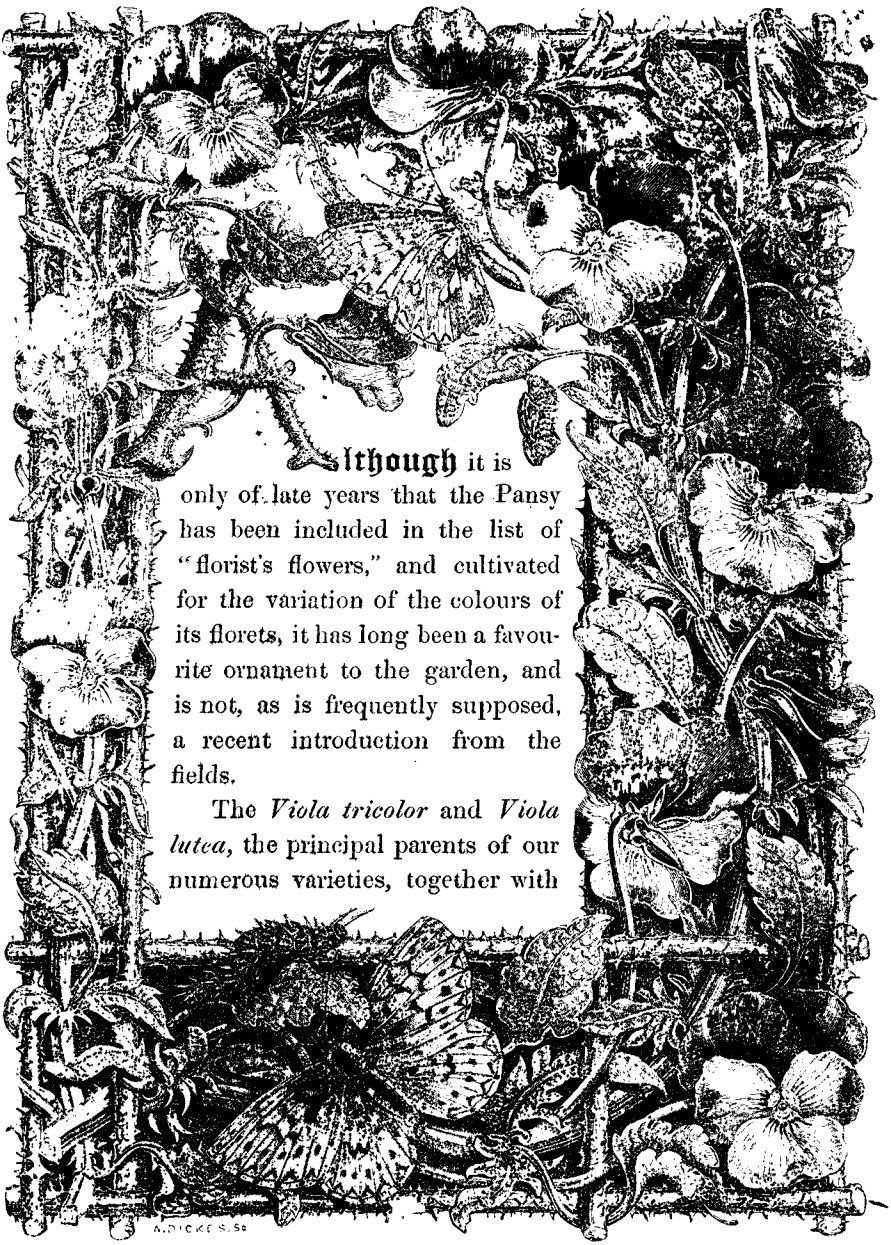
" A Violet by a mossy stone
Half hidden from the eye!
Fair as a star, when only one
Is shining in the sky."

The Pansy.

VIOLA TRICOLOR.

"The Pansie, Heartsease maidens call."

DRAYTON.



Although it is only of late years that the Pansy has been included in the list of "florist's flowers," and cultivated for the variation of the colours of its florets, it has long been a favourite ornament to the garden, and is not, as is frequently supposed, a recent introduction from the fields.

The *Viola tricolor* and *Viola lutea*, the principal parents of our numerous varieties, together with

a double *Viola tricolor*, are mentioned by Gerarde and Parkinson as favourite garden flowers; to which, says the latter, "some give foolish names, as, Love-in-idleness, Cull-me-to-you, and Three-faces-in-a-hood." The Pansy has many other fanciful names, but none better than the well-known ones of Pansy, *pensée*, and Heart's ease.

It is first introduced into poetry by Spenser, both as

"The pretty Paunce;"

and with other plants,

"—— sweet rosemaries
And fragrant violets and Pances trim."

These flowers are all mentioned by Ophelia, while engaged in her melancholy task of bestowing remembrances and befitting gifts on her friends, with a scarce-sorrowing presentiment of her own approaching death. Alluding to the French derivation of the name Pansy, she says,

"There is Pansies, that 's for thoughts."

The lines in which she mentions violets and rosemary are quoted elsewhere.

The name, Love-in-idleness, is equivalent to Heart's-ease (for what heart is at ease where love is busy?); and, therefore, though Shakspere calls it "Cupid's flower," and also,

"Flower of this purple dye,
Hit with Cupid's archery,"

it is nevertheless appropriately selected to receive the ineffective dart aimed by the God of Love at the heart of the virgin Queen:—

"That very time I saw ————
Flying between the cold moon and the earth,
Cupid all arm'd: a certain aim he took
At a fair vestal, throned by the west;
And loosed his love-shaft smartly from his bow,
As it should pierce a hundred thousand hearts:
But I might see young Cupid's fiery shaft
Quench'd in the chaste beams of the watery moon;
And the imperial votaress pass'd on,
In maiden meditation, fancy-free.
Yet mark'd I where the bolt of Cupid fell:
It fell upon a little western flower,—
Before milk white, now purple with love's wound;—
And maidens call it, Love-in-idleness."

Ben Jonson, who lost no opportunity of showing his learning, adheres to the orthography which most accurately gives the French pronunciation:—

"—— Now the shining meads
Do boast the Paunsè, lily, and the rose,
And every flower doth laugh as Zephyr blows."

Drayton invariably places the violet and the Pansy together in his wreaths, on account of their near relationship:—

"The pretty Pansy then I'll tie,
Like stones some chains enchasing;
And next to them, their near ally,
The purple violet placing;"

and he honours both with a place in the "Muse's Elysium:"—

"The Pansy and the violet here,
As seeming to descend
Both from one root, a very pair,
For sweetness do contend."

Herrick is fond of assigning origins to flowers, and has many fancies similar to the following, though most of them partake more of the "quaint

madness" of his time, than of that brilliant fancy which some of his more natural and heartfelt effusions exhibit.

HOW PANSIES, OR HEART'S-EASE, CAME FIRST.

"Frolic virgins once these were,
Over-loving, living here;
Being here their ends denied,
Ran for sweethearts mad and died;
Love, in pity of their tears,
And their loss in blooming years,
For their restless here-spent hours,
Gave them Heart's-ease turn'd to flowers."

TO PANSIES.

"Ah, cruel Love! must I endure
Thy many scorns, and find no cure?
Say, are thy med'cines made to be
Helps to all others, but to me?—
I'll leave thee, and to Pansies come:
Comforts you'll afford me some;
You can ease my heart and do,
What Love could ne'er be brought unto."

The Pansy seems to have been one of Milton's favourite flowers. With violets and other Spring

flowers it contributed to decorate the paradisiacal couch of love:—

"—— flowers were the couch;
Pansies, and violets, and asphodel,
And hyacinths, earth's freshest, softest lap."

And, in Comus, it finds also a place among the tributary wreaths which the shepherds of the Cotswold annually devoted to the river-gods:—

"Throw sweet garland wreaths into her stream,
Of Pansies, pinks, and gaudy daffodils."

Under the name of Pansy, this flower has been frequently selected by the poets to adorn the tomb of those whom they have celebrated in elegiac strains. Thus Milton brings

"—— the Pansy, freak'd with jet,"

to strew on the hearse of Lycidas.

Collins tells us when

"Young Damon of the vale was dead ——
Pale Pansies o'er his corpse were placed,
Which, pluck'd before their time,
Bestrew'd the boy, like him to waste,
And wither in their prime."

And Mason places the grave of his friend, Mr. Pelham, in

" —— the cypress grove
Where Pansies spring, and each funereal flower."

Shelley also, in the bitterness of his disappointed aspirations, desires the funereal flower for his own tomb:—

" Pansies let my flowers be:
On the living grave I bear,
Scatter them without a tear;
Let no friend, however dear,
Waste one hope, one fear for me."

Modern skill has, however, converted the "dejected hue" of the Pansy into a variety of lustrous colours, so that it seems no longer appropriate to mournful thoughts; nor when we look upon

" —— the garden's gem,
Heart's-ease, like a gallant bold
In his coat of purple and gold,"

L. HUNT.

can we fancy that it would ever have been made their emblem; so great is the change which cultivation has wrought in it.

Though not so appropriate to melancholy associations, the cultivated Pansy is nevertheless as well qualified as its humble progenitor to whisper consolatory hope; for it seems, from its own history, to speak of happier and brighter days. A modern poet appears to have regarded it in this light:—

"And thou, so rich in gentle names, appealing
To hearts that own our nature's common lot;
Thou, styled by sportive Fancy's better feeling,
'A Thought,' the 'Heart's-ease,' or 'Forget-me-not:'
Who deck'st alike the peasant's garden plot,
And castle's proud parterre; with humble joy,
Revive alike by castle and by cot
Hopes which ought not like things of time to cloy,
And feelings time itself shall deepen—not destroy."

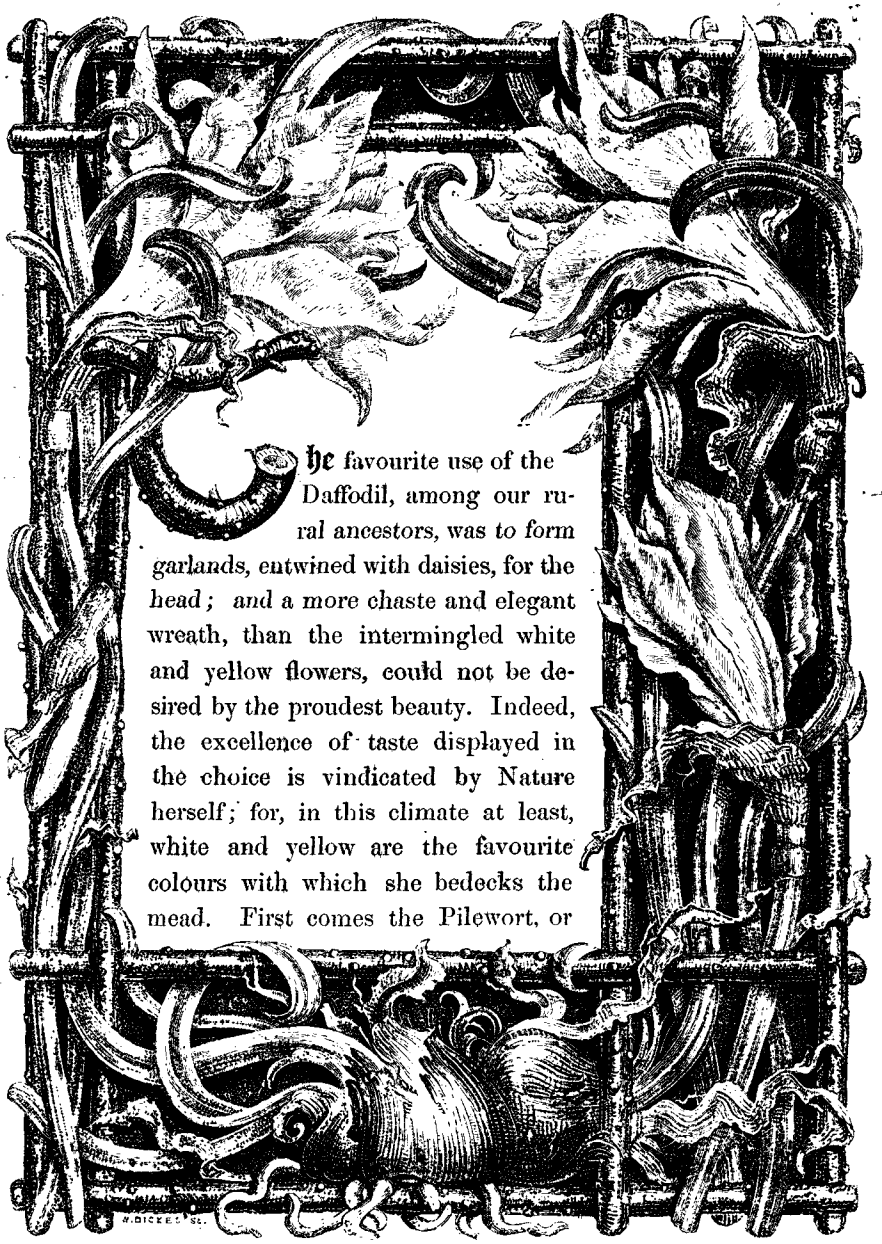
B. BARTON.

The Daffodil.

NARCISSUS. PSEUDO-NARCISSUS.

"Strew me the ground with Daffadowndillies,
And cowslips, and kingcups, and loved lilies."

SPENSER



The favourite use of the Daffodil, among our rural ancestors, was to form garlands, entwined with daisies, for the head; and a more chaste and elegant wreath, than the intermingled white and yellow flowers, could not be desired by the proudest beauty. Indeed, the excellence of taste displayed in the choice is vindicated by Nature herself; for, in this climate at least, white and yellow are the favourite colours with which she bedecks the mead. First comes the Pilewort, or

Lesser Celandine, with the Daisy; then the Buttercup and Wood Anemone; then the Bachelor's Button and the Dandelion (meet companions); then the Meadow-bout and the Lady's-smock; and, lastly, the Yellow Ox-eye, or Corn Marigold, with the White Ox-eye, or Corn Chamomile.

Spenser describes a nymph employed in gathering the flowers for the purpose of making these favourite head-garlands:—

" —— where-as she play'd
Amongst her wat'ry sisters, by a pond,
Gathering sweet Daffadillies, to have made
Gay girlonds, from the sun their foreheads fair
to shade;"

but when weaving a pastoral coronet for the head of Queen Elizabeth, he gives a more appropriate colouring to the imperial circlet, by entwining roses with the golden flower:—

" Upon her head a cremosin coronet
With damask roses and Daffadillies set."

He likewise compares the maiden Queen herself to such a garland:—

"But if I her like in aught on earth might read,
I would her liken to a crown of lilies
Upon a virgin bride's adorned head,
With roses dight, and goolds, and Daffadillies."

For a like purpose Ben Jonson requires the Daffodil:—

"And tell the Daffodil, against that day,
That we prepare new garlands fresh as May."

In a passage, which has been quoted in a previous chapter, Ben Jonson speaks of

"The chequed and purple-ringed Daffodil."

The "purple-ringed Daffodil" is the plant now commonly known as the *Narcissus poeticus*, but described by Jonson's cotemporary, Parkinson, as the "*Narcissus medio purpureus*, or purple-ringed Daffodil." The "chequed Daffodil" is explained by Parkinson to be the Spotted Fritillary, of which he says: "This flower has received many names; some calling it *Flos Meleagridis*, or Ginnie-hen flower, from the variety of the colours in the flower agreeing with the feathers of that bird. It is now generally

called Fritillaria, of the word *Fritillus*, which divers doe take for the chesse-borde, or table whereon they play, whereunto by reason of the resemblance of the great squares or spots so like it, they did presently referre it. But because the errorre which first referred it to a Daffodil, is growne strong by custome of continuance, I leave to every one their owne will, to call it in English either *Fritillaria*, as it is called of most, or the *checkered Daffodil*, or the Ginnie-hen flower, or, as I doe, the checkered Lilly."

The crocus and the snowdrop, though they "tell tales about the Spring," are far from harbingering it; for we must wait many weeks before the genial influence of that blood-stirring season can be felt. Not so the Daffodil, for Shakspere truly tells us,

"When Daffodils begin to peer,
With heigh! the doxy over the dale,
Why then comes in the sweet o' the year,
For the red blood reigns in the Winter's pale."*

* Farmer explains the last line as follows: "The red, *Spring* blood, now reigns over the parts lately under the *pale* or dominion of Winter." It appears more probable, however, that "pale" is opposed to "red," and that blood is understood after it. It is a very simple metaphor, to speak of the red, healthy blood of young Spring, as opposed to the pale, cold blood of old Winter

And with still more beauty he fixes the precise time of the Daffodil's flowering:—

"—— Daffodils
That come before the swallow dares, and take
The winds of March with beauty."

The reference to the equinoctial gales, and the advent of the swallow, indicates the end of March, when the Daffodils are rearing their heads conspicuous over the yet short herbage, and blending their refulgent cups with the lively tints of the young grass.

In the present matter-of-fact days, we look back on the rural customs of our ancestors with something of the same feeling with which we regard the terrestrial mythology of the ancients. They both belong to the realms of poetry, and we cannot realize to ourselves the re-appearance of either. We should as soon expect to encounter a Naiad bathing in a sequestered spring, or a Dryad wandering through a lonely wood, as to have our walk, through a rural district, diversified by a serenade from joyous shepherds at a feast of

"Green plumbs, and wildings, cherries, chief of feast,
Fresh cheese and dowsets, curds and clouted cream,

Spiced syllabubs, and cider of the best,—
In the fresh shadow of their summer bowers;"

yet this not despicable board is described by Drayton (a sound authority on such subjects) as spread for the regalement of the shepherds, celebrating the close of the shearing season, on the Cotswold hills. On this occasion it was usual to choose "The Shepherd King." The envied choice fell on him whose

"— flocks the earliest lamb should bring;"

and under his presidency was the joyous feast conducted.

After the repast, when

"The sun to west a little 'gan to lean,"

and the shepherdesses had joined the revellers, music and song were introduced to close the pleasures of the day.

It is the first song which, being appropriate to the subject of this chapter, has caused us to digress into a reminiscence of bygone days. A shepherd misses his nymph from among the assembled train, and her name of Daffodil, with the ambiguous description given of her by her

lover, sets the questioner and responder at cross-purposes:—

BATTE.

"Gorbo, as thou cam'st this way,
By yonder little hill,
Or as thou through the fields didst stray,
Saw'st thou my Daffodil?

She 's in a frock of Lincoln green,
Which colour likes her sight,
And never hath her beauty seen,
But through a veil of white.

GORBO.

Thou well describ'st the Daffodil—
It is not full an hour
Since, by the spring near yonder hill,
I saw that lovely flower.

BATTE.

Yet my fair flower thou didst not meet,
Nor news of her didst bring,
And yet my Daffodil 's more sweet
Than that by yonder spring."

Herrick, in his beautiful panegyric on country life, alludes to the coronal of Daffodils and daisies to which we have previously referred:—

"Sweet country life! to such unknown
Whose lives are others, not their own—
Thou hast thy eves and holidays,
On which the young men and maids meet.
To exercise their dancing feet;
Tripping the comely country round,
With Daffodils and daisies crown'd."

In the following lines we have, perhaps, the first rough sketch of the idea which Herrick so beautifully treated, in the well-known stanzas "To Daffodils:"—

DIVINATION BY A DAFFODIL.

"When a Daffodil I see
Hanging down his head t'wards me,
Guess I may what I must be:
First, I shall decline my head;
Secondly, I shall be dead;
Lastly, safely buried."

TO DAFFODILS.

"Fair Daffodils, we weep to see
You haste away so soon,
As yet the early-rising sun
Has not attained his noon;

Stay, stay,
Until the hast'ning day
Has run,
But to the even-song;
And, having pray'd together, we
Will go with you along.

We have short time to stay as you,
We have as short a spring;
As quick a growth to meet decay,
As you or anything:
We die
As your hours do, and dry
Away
Like to the summer's rain,
Or as the pearls of morning dew,
Ne'er to be found again."

The festivities of the shearing season, on the banks of the Severn, described by Drayton, are also alluded to by Milton:—

"—— the shepherds at their festivals,
Carol her goodness loud in rustic lays,
And throw sweet garland wreaths into her stream,
Of pansies, pinks, and gaudy Daffodils."

The Daffodil being a variety of Narcissus, the classical youth and flower are often alluded to under the former name, by the elder poets. It is in this sense that it is used in the following lines by Milton in connection with another classical flower, likewise said to have sprung from the blood of an unhappy lover:—

"Bid Amaranthus all his beauty shed,
And Daffadillies fill their cups with tears."

The next extract, *longo intervallo,* is from Hurdis. Even as late as his time the Daffodil was still called the Lily, a name by which one species of it seems to have been frequently mentioned by the elder poets:—

"Lily of Lent with diadem superb,
The monarch Daffodil uprears his head,
Nor dreads the guillotine of the keen gale."

It is not improbable that these lines are intended to describe the Crown-Imperial; to which, however, the following lines, by Leyden, would be more applicable:—

"The Daffodils expand their yellow flowers,
The lusty stalk, with sap luxuriant swells,
And, curling round it, smile the bursting bells."

It is the peculiar gift of the poet that "the dull catalogue of common things" affords to him sources of infinite gratification, unknown to less creative minds; and that objects which other men pass by unheeded he converts, by the pure chemistry of fine thoughts, *into* subjects of deep musing, and heart-soothing contemplation. Hence the face of Nature, where every thing is beautiful, is to him a fountain of perpetual enjoyment, even though she present nothing more striking than a tuft of golden Daffodils; for,

"A thing of beauty is a joy for ever,
Its loveliness increases, it will never
Pass into nothingness; but still will keep
A bower quiet for us, and a sleep
Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing!
Therefore on every morrow are we wreathing
A flowery band to bind us to the earth:
* * * Yes, in spite of all,
Some shape of beauty moves away the pall
From our dark spirits. Such the sun, the moon,
Trees old and young, sprouting a shady boon
For simple sheep; and such are Daffodils,
With the green world they live in."

KEATS.

This sentiment is expanded by Wordsworth into several beautiful stanzas; but, in pursuance of our plan, we must refer the reader to his works, to learn the pleasure which a poet can derive from

"A host of golden Daffodils,
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.
Continuous as the stars that shine,
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line,
Along the margin of a bay;
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.
The waves beside them danced; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company."

The Anemone.

ANEMONE NEMOROSA.

"The boy, with whom Love seem'd to die,
Bleeds in this pale Anemone."

SANDYS.

"—— The copse's pride, Anemones,
With rays like golden studs on ivory laid
Most delicate; but touch'd with purple clouds,—
Fit crown for April's fair but changeful brow."

MRS. C. SMITH.

The Anemone is one of the flowers which are fabled to have sprung from the tears of Venus intermingled with the blood of her beloved Adonis, when he was slain by the infuriate boar; and

"—— Venus mourn'd, and with the precious shower
Of her warm tears, cherish'd the springing flower."

It must be noticed, however, that the *Flos Adonis*, Pheasant's Eye (formerly called Anemone), is the classical flower.

The metamorphosis is described by Shakspere in his beautiful poem, "Venus and Adonis:"—

"By this, the boy that by her side lay kill'd,
Was melted like a vapour from her sight;
And in his blood that on the ground lay spill'd,
A purple flower sprung up, checker'd with white,
Resembling well his pale cheeks, and the blood
Which in round drops upon their whiteness stood

She bows her head the new-sprung flower to smell,
Comparing it to her Adonis' breath;
And says, within her bosom it shall dwell,
Since he himself is reft from her by death:
She crops the stalk, and in the breach appears,
Green dropping sap, which she compares to tears.

'Poor flower!' quoth she, 'this was thy father's guise,
(Sweet issue of a more sweet-smelling sire)
For every little grief to wet his eyes;
To grow unto himself was his desire,
And so 't is thine; but know it is as good
To wither in my breast, as in his blood.

Here was thy father's bed, here in my breast;
Thou art the next of blood, and 't is thy right:
Lo! in this hollow cradle take thy rest,
My throbbing heart shall rock thee day and night;
There shall not be one minute in an hour,
Wherein I will not kiss my sweet love's flower.'"

Thomson in allusion to the name, Anemone, or Wind-flower, describes

"From the soft wing of vernal breezes shed,
Anemonies."

And certainly when in Spring

"The woods, the white Anemonies array,"

J. SCOTT.

one may almost fancy that the wind *has* heaped up the silvery blossoms on the sheltered bank, where they show like a snow-drift. Every one who at the rise of the year leaves his fireside to wander through the fields, will sympathize with the wish of Hurdis:—

"If now I journey, often at my side
Let me the blue-bell'd hyacinth behold,
The silver Anemone of the wood,
And golden primrose intermingled well."

Mrs. C. Smith likewise notices the Anemone as one of the flowers indicative of the Spring:—

"Then thickly strewn in woodland bowers,
Anemonies their stars unfold;"

and describing the flower, she correctly says,

"—— veins empurpling all her tassels pale
Bends the soft Wind-flower in the tepid gale."

SHELLEY.

THE ISLE.

"There was a little lawny Islet
By Anemone and Violet,
Like mosaic, paven:
And its roof was flowers and leaves
Which the summer's breath enweaves,
Where nor sun, nor showers, nor breeze,
Pierce the pines and tallest trees,
Each a gem engraven:
Girt by many an azure wave,
With which the clouds and mountains pave
A lake's blue chasm."

From the briefness of its existence, the Anemone is chosen by Shelley as an emblem of frailty, when

"—— some cloud of dew
Bends, and then fades silently,
One frail and fair Anemone."

Hence also the poetical allusion of Sir W. Jones:

"Youth, like a thin Anemone, displays
His silken leaf, and in a morn decays."

Many poets seem to suppose that the Anemone requires a breeze to unclasp its petals, in order to enable the lover of flowers to

"—— see
When southern winds first wake the vernal singing,
The star-gleam of the Wood-anemone."

HEMANS.

So likewise H. Smith describes

"Coy Anemone that ne'er uncloses
Her lips until they 're blown on by the wind."

Mrs. Hemans very sweetly celebrates the blue variety which grows wild in some parts of England:—

"Flower of starry clearness bright,
Quivering urn of colour'd light,

Hast thou drawn thy cup's rich dye,
From the intenseness of the sky,
Till the purple heavens in thee,
Set their smile, Anemone?

* * * * *

Flower! the laurel still may shed
Brightness round the victor's head;
And the rose in beauty's hair
Still its festal glory wear;
And the willow-leaves droop o'er
Brows which love sustains no more:
But by living rays refined,
Thou, the trembler of the wind,
Thou, the spiritual flower,
Sentient of each breeze and shower,
Thou, rejoicing in the skies,
And transpierced with all their dyes;
Breathing vase with light o'erflowing,
Gem-like to thy centre glowing;
Thou the Poet's type shalt be,
Flower of soul, Anemone!

The Lily of the Valley.

CONVALLARIA MAIALIS.

"The Lily, silver mistress of the vale."

CHURCHILL.

This flower, from bearing the same name as the plant from which our Saviour drew His "touching illustration," has usually been associated with this interesting circumstance. But the Lily of the Valley, though a native of England, and growing profusely in many places, is said to be unknown in the warmer climates of the South, and cannot therefore be the flower alluded to in Scripture. It has been suggested that the *Amaryllis lutea* is more probably the plant in question, both from its profuseness in the fields of Palestine, and from its striking appearance at certain seasons

of the year, when many acres of pasture-land are yellow over with its blossoms.

But it is impossible to tell with certainty what flower was meant; and it is really of very little consequence, inasmuch as the truth, which our Saviour intended to illustrate, is equally to be learnt from every herb which grows, and every insect which crawls; and doubtless the Lily was only named as happening to be a conspicuous object, near at hand, to which the Lord could direct the attention of his disciples. But as later poets have connected our little English flower with this interesting subject, we shall, under the present title, incorporate what they may have said upon it, where there is a doubt to what flower they really allude.

Prior thus paraphrases the words of Scripture:

"Take but the humblest Lily of the field,
And if our pride will to our reason yield,
It must by sure comparison be shown
That on the regal seat great David's son,
Array'd in all his robes and types of power,
Shines with less glory than that simple flower."

As the poets have frequently introduced this emblem of purity into their poetry, though there

is no true Lily which grows wild in England, it becomes a doubtful question what flower they mean, when they introduce it among our native plants. It is probable that the elder poets meant a species of Daffodil, and perhaps later poets, if they had *any meaning at all*, intended the Lily of the Valley.

Thus Cowley, on the banks of a river "which Nature, the best gardener, made," absurdly says,

"Here Lilies wash, and grow more white;"

and Thomson describes more naturally, though not more definitely, a similar spot:—

"—— See how the Lily drinks
The latent rill, scarce oozing thro' the grass
Of growth luxuriant, or the humid bank
In fair profusion decks."

He likewise paraphrases the words of Scripture:—

"Observe the Lily's snowy grace!
Observe the curious vegetable race!
They neither toil nor spin, but careless grow—
Yet see how warm they blush! how bright they glow!
What regal vestments can with them compare?
What king so shining, or what queen so fair?"

But it is doubtful whether Thomson means the Lily of the Valley in the above extracts, for a little further on he mentions it by its full name—the earliest instance, we believe, in poetry—when he proposes at the noon-tide hour to

"— seek the bank where flowering elders crowd,
Where scatter'd wild the Lily of the Vale
Its balmy essence breathes."

Armstrong also, in an English scene, mentions,

"—— in virgin beauty blows
The tender Lily languishingly sweet."

N. Cotton first distinctly assigns to the Valley-lily its modern characteristic of bashful modesty:—

"—— the coy Lily of the Vale
Shuns eminence, and loves the dale."

It is eulogized much too highly by Bruce, who has given it the prerogative of the White Lily. He calls it

"The Lily of the Vale, of flowers the queen;"

and again:—

"No flower amid the garden fairer grows,
Than the sweet Lily of the lowly Vale."

J. Scott mentions it by its synonyme of May-lily:—

"Sweet May-lilies richest odours shed."

Mrs. Tighe's description is beautiful and accurate:—

"There wrapt in verdure fragrant Lilies blow,
Lilies that love the Vale, and hide their bells
of snow."

Burns mentions it under the more doubtful name of Lily:—

"Now blooms the Lily by the bank;"

and among wild flowers, "a' to be a posie to my ain dear May," he places,

"The Lily it is pure, and the Lily it is fair,
And in her lovely bosom I 'll place the Lily
there."

Hurdis moralizes at some length upon it:—

"—— to the curious eye,
A little monitor presents her page
Of choice instruction, with her snowy bells,

The Lily of the Vale. She nor affects
The public walk, nor gaze of mid-day sun.
She to no state or dignity aspires,
But silent and alone puts on her suit,
And sheds her lasting perfume, but for which
We had not known there was a thing so sweet
Hid in the gloomy shade. So when the blast
Her sister tribes confounds, and to the earth
Stoops their high heads that vainly were exposed,
She feels it not, but flourishes anew,
Still shelter'd and secure. And so the storm,
That makes the high elm couch, and rends the oak,
The humble Lily spares. A thousand blows,
Which shake the lofty monarch on his throne,
We lesser folks feel not. Keen are the pains
Advancement often brings. To be secure,
Be humble; to be happy, be content."

MRS. CHARLOTTE SMITH.

"Miranda! mark where, shrinking from the gale,
Its silken leaves yet moist with early dew,
That fair faint flower, the Lily of the Vale
Droops its meek head, and looks, methinks, like you!

Wrapp'd in a shadowy veil of tender green,
Its snowy bells a soft perfume dispense,
And bending, as reluctant to be seen,
In simple loveliness it soothes the sense.
With bosom bared to meet the garish day,
The glaring tulip, gaudy, undismay'd,
Offends the eye of taste, that turns away
To seek the Lily in her fragrant shade.
With such unconscious beauty, pensive, mild,
Miranda charms. Nature's soft modest child!'

Modern poets have vied with one another in describing the Lily of the Valley. Thus Shelley:

"——The Naiad-like Lily of the Vale,
Whom youth makes so fair, and passion so pale,
That the light of its tremulous bells is seen
Through their pavilions of tender green."

Keats fancifully speaks of

"——Valley-lilies whiter still
Than Leda's love"

And Leigh Hunt:—

"The nice-leaved lesser Lilies,
Shading like detected light,
Their little green-tipt lamps of white."

Wordsworth describes it as

"—— that shy plant * *
* * * the Lily of the Vale,
That loves the ground, and from the sun withholds
Her pensive beauty, from the breeze her sweets."

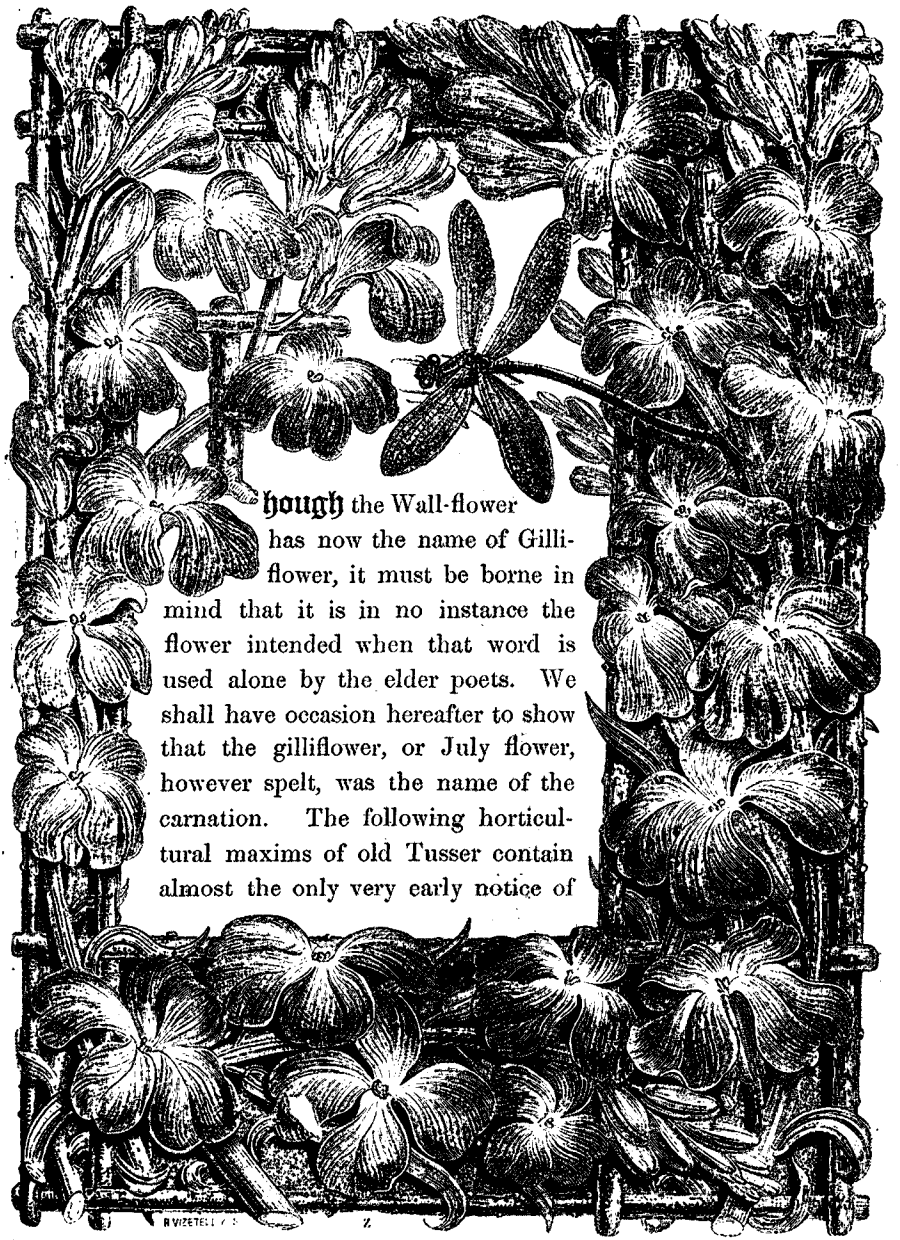
If Wordsworth means that the Lily of the Valley is scentless he is undoubtedly mistaken, for it possesses a strong and delicate hyacinthine smell, which may be perceived more distinctly in the perfumed air than that of almost any other wild-flower.

The Wall-Flower.

CHEIRANTHUS FRUTICULOSUS.

"The yellow Wall-flower stain'd with iron-brown."

THOMSON.



Though the Wall-flower has now the name of Gilliflower, it must be borne in mind that it is in no instance the flower intended when that word is used alone by the elder poets. We shall have occasion hereafter to show that the gilliflower, or July flower, however spelt, was the name of the carnation. The following horticultural maxims of old Tusser contain almost the only very early notice of

the Wall-gilli-flower, which he distinguishes from the carnation by its specific character:—

"Set Gilli-flowers all,
That grows on the *wall*."

Elsewhere he gives correct directions for the preservation of the carnation during the winter:—

"The gilliflower also the skilful do know,
Doth look to be cover'd in frost and in snow."

HERRICK.

HOW THE WALL-FLOWER CAME FIRST: WHY SO CALLED.

"Why this flower is now call'd so,
List, sweet maids, and you shall know:
Understand this firstling was,
Once a brisk and bonny lass,
Kept as close as Danae was;
Who a sprightly springall loved,
And to have it fully proved,
Up she got upon a wall,
'Tempting down to slide withal;
But the silken twist untied,
So she fell, and bruised she died.
Love in pity of the deed,
And her loving luckless speed,
Turn'd her to this plant we call
Now, 'The flower of the Wall.'"

Despite Herrick's fanciful derivation, the reader will probably incline to the common opinion, that the name of the flower is derived from its so frequently lending a grace to old walls. Like a friend, faithful in adversity, its value is only known when ruin and desolation have come down upon the house, whose walls the gay and the proud, the young and the happy, baron, knight, cavalier, and lady, had once made re-echo with revelry and song; but which now give back no sound, save the hoot of the midnight owl, or the moaning of the wind. Yet could those joyous smiles be traced to the heart, they would perhaps be found to originate in disappointment, in bitter envyings, and sarcastic mockeries, which must wear the mask of gaiety. Be this as it may, here is one who tells us that he prefers the wall decorated with its own plant to the wall hung with gorgeous arras:—

"I shun the scenes where madd'ning passion raves,
Where pride and folly high dominion hold;
* * * * * *
The grassy land, the wood-surrounded field,
The rude stone fence with fragrant Wall flowers gay,

The clay-built cot, to me more pleasure yield,
Than all the pomp imperial domes display."

J. SCOTT.

Langhorne, who had the good taste to select flowers on which to found a few instructive fables, has one on the Wall-flower, which will be found well worthy of perusal:—

THE WALL-FLOWER.

"Why loves my flower, the sweetest flower
That swells the golden breast of May,
Thrown rudely o'er this ruin'd tower,
To waste her solitary day?

* * * * *

For never sure was beauty born
To live in life's deserted shade!
Come, lovely flower, my banks adorn,
My banks for life and beauty made.

Thus Pity waked the tender thought,
And by her sweet persuasion led,
To seize the hermit-flower I sought,
And bear her from her stony bed.

I sought—but sudden on mine ear
A voice in hollow murmurs broke,
And smote my heart with holy fear—
The Genius of the ruin spoke:—

'From thee be far the ungentle deed,
The honours of the dead to spoil,
Or take the sole remaining meed,
The flower that crowns their former toil!

Nor deem that flower the garden's foe,
Or fond to grace this barren shade;
'Tis Nature tells her to bestow
Her honours on the lonely dead.

For this obedient Zephyrs bear
Her light seeds round yon turret's mould,
And undispersed by tempests there,
They rise in vegetable gold.' "

Both from a love of Nature and of antiquarian lore Sir W. Scott delighted to wander,

" —— by the roofless tower,
Where the Wall-flower scents the dewy air."
BURNS.

Even in childhood's early days he was to be seen like Wordsworth,

" —— climbing, a bold suitor,
Up to the flowers whose golden progeny
Still round the shatter'd brow in beauty wave;"
WORDSWORTH.

for, as he himself says,

"—— well the lonely infant knew
Recesses where the Wall-flower grew ——
I deem'd such nooks the sweetest shade,
The sun in all his round survey'd;
And still I thought that shatter'd tower,
The mightiest work of human power;"

and few are the "scites of old renown" in Scotland where the Wall-flower waves not on the ruined hold, or where the wanderer may not perceive that

"—— the rich Wall-flower scent
From every niche and mossy corner floats,
Embalming its decay."

HEMANS.

Even in the romantic land of Italy, on the ruins of Hadrian's Villa at Tivoli,

"O'er fallen shrine and ruin'd frieze
The Wall-flower rustles in the breeze;"

HEMANS.

and we may therefore justly conclude that when Sir W. Scott found one of his favourite flowers growing so far from the land, for which in his

last illness his heart anxiously yearned, he sent it as the most acceptable present he could make to his friend. We have accordingly given the following lines a place here, though the Wall-flower is not specifically mentioned:—

TO A LADY,

WITH FLOWERS FROM A ROMAN WALL.

"Take these flowers, which purple waving,
On the ruin'd rampart grew,
Where, the sons of freedom braving,
Rome's imperial standards flew.

Warriors from the breach of danger
Pluck no longer laurels there;
They but yield the passing stranger
Wild-flower wreaths for beauty's hair."

The Wall-flower is almost necessarily indebted for its principal eulogies to modern poets; for, when the elder bards sang, the desolation which it helps to make beautiful had not fallen upon those venerable piles which stand now only as mementos of our ancestors' piety. Art then made splendid the walls which Nature now makes beautiful. Whether it is not better as it is; whether we should not rather invoke Nature to adorn

the ruined walls with her elegant tapestry, than desire their re-dedication to *pristine* uses—are questions not within our province to answer. A modern poet, of acknowledged piety, appears to deem the Wall-flower the best decoration of the ruins of the Abbey of Bury St. Edmunds, one of the most gorgeous of those ancient fanes:—

"And where my favourite Abbey rears on high
Its crumbling ruins, on their loftiest crest
Ye Wall-flowers shed your tints of golden dye,
On which the morning sun-beams love to rest;
On which, when glory fills the glowing west,
The parting splendours of the day's decline,
With fascination to the heart address'd,
So tenderly and beautifully shine,
As if reluctant still to leave that hoary shrine."

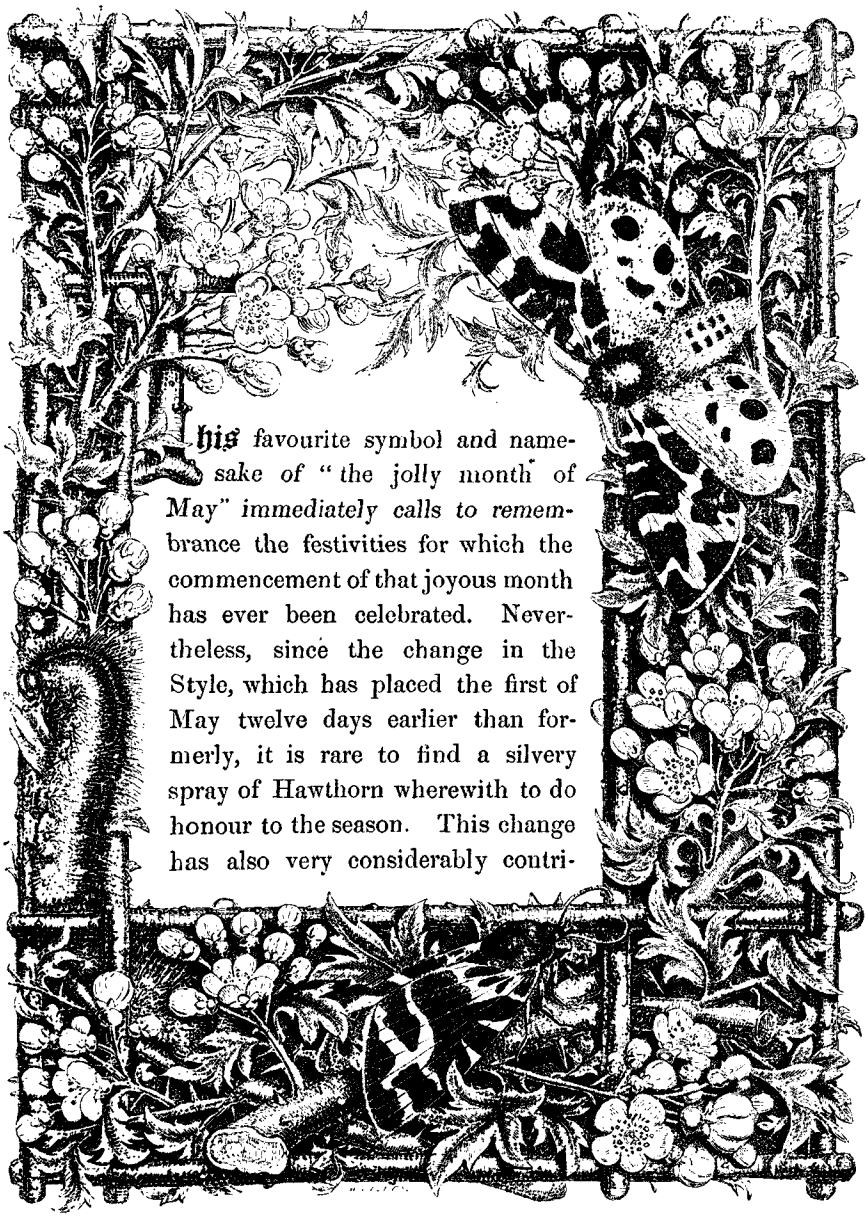
B. BARTON.

The Hawthorn.

CRATÆGUS OXYACANTHA.

"And the Hawthorn every day
Spreads some little show of May."

W. BROWNE.



This favourite symbol and namesake of "the jolly month of May" immediately calls to remembrance the festivities for which the commencement of that joyous month has ever been celebrated. Nevertheless, since the change in the Style, which has placed the first of May twelve days earlier than formerly, it is rare to find a silvery spray of Hawthorn wherewith to do honour to the season. This change has also very considerably contri-

buted to drive out the amusements with which our ancestors celebrated it: for it now too often happens that the frequent showers, for which their April was proverbial, continue to fall in the first twelve days of the legislative month of May, in spite of the Act of Parliament to the contrary in that case made and provided.

This beautiful decoration of our fertile fields is described by Chaucer, as

" —— the white Hawthorne
In white motley, that so sweet doth smell;"

and, by Gawin Douglass,

"The bloomed Hawthorne clad his pykis all;"

very different from its dismal appearance in the winter season, when Sackville noticed it:—

" Hawthorn had lost his motley livery;
The naked twigs were shivering all for cold,
And dropping down the tears abundantly."

A quaint, but beautifully truthful, picture! for there is no other tree whose twigs retain so long in sparkling drops, like tears, the condensed mists and damps of a gloomy Winter's day.

The greening of the Hawthorn hedges in Spring is one of the first signs of departing Winter for which we anxiously look; and the familiar greeting of rural residents at this season is not—"what a fine, or dismal, day!" but, "the hedges are getting green!" or, in the words of one of Spenser's shepherds calling to his companion in the month of March,

> "Seest not thilk same Hawthorn stud,
> How bragly it begins to bud,
> And utter his tender head?
> Flora now calleth forth each flower,
> And bids make ready Maia's bower,
> That new is uprist from bed."

It is very usual for the elder poets to place their shepherds under the appropriate shadow of a Hawthorn; but Shakspere alone has elevated the shepherd's peaceful seat above that of those who sit in high places:—

> "Gives not the Hawthorn bush a sweeter shade
> To shepherds, looking on their silly sheep,
> Than doth a rich embroidered canopy
> To kings, that fear their subjects' treachery?
> O yes, it doth—a thousand-fold it doth!"

Besides furnishing us with a beautiful description of the tree, W. Browne teaches from it the same lesson which Shakspere taught—contentment:—

"Amongst the many buds proclaiming May,
(Decking the fields in holiday's array,
Striving who shall surpass in bravery,)
Mark the fair blooming of the Hawthorn tree;
Who, finely clothed in a robe of white,
Feeds full the wanton eye with May's delight;
Yet for the bravery that she is in,
Doth neither handle card nor wheel to spin;
Nor changeth robes but twice, is never seen
In other colours than in white or green.
Learn then content, young shepherd, from this tree,
Whose greatest wealth is Nature's livery;
And richest ingots never toil to find,
Nor care for poverty, but of the mind."

Herrick's beautiful lines addressed "To Blossoms," may appropriately find a place here:—

"Fair pledges of a fruitful tree,
Why do ye fall so fast?
Your date is not so past

But you may stay here yet awhile,
To blush and gently smile,
And go at last.

What! were ye born to be
An hour, or half's, delight,
And so to bid good night?
'T was pity Nature brought ye forth
Merely to show your worth,
And lose you quite.

But ye are lovely leaves, where we
May read how soon things have
Their end, though ne'er so brave;
And after they have shown their pride,
Like you, awhile, they glide
Into the grave."

Each of the following couplets furnishes a natural, simple, but complete picture; and shows how unnecessary lengthy descriptions are to convey a perfect image, if the portraying hand be that of a master:—

"And every shepherd tells his tale,
Under the Hawthorn in the dale."

MILTON.

"The Hawthorn bush, with seats beneath the shade,
For talking age and whispering lovers made."

GOLDSMITH

Numberless are the spots in this favoured island where we may

"Walk, calmly musing in a shady way,
Where flowering Hawthorns break the sunny ray;"

PARNELL.

or, delighted, mark

"——blooming Hawthorns variegate the scene,"

BRUCE.

upon the wild heath, where

"Hawthorns tall, their silver bloom disclose."

J. SCOTT.

Nor is it a trifling addition to the pleasures which this splendid shrub affords to the senses, that we may, at the same time, catch the perfume from

"The May-flower'd hedges, scenting every breeze;"

IBID.

when in the spring-time of the year

"The Hawthorn boughs, by breezes fann'd,
Diffuse a rich perfume."

J. SCOTT.

Nor is this pleasure confined to the southern parts of the island; in Scotland, also,

"The scented birk and Hawthorn white,
Across the pool their arms unite,
Alike to screen the birdies' nest,
And little fishes' caller rest."

BURNS.

And in both countries it is one of the gratifications, open alike to the rich and the poor, to wander through

"—— fruitful vales,
Where spreading Hawthorns gaily bloom."

IBID.

"The mossy seat beneath the Hawthorn's shade," has, like the Hawthorn hedge, long been the favourite subject of our poets' encomiums; and besides those which we have already given, we may quote another, not inferior, by H. K. White —

"A little onward let me bend my way,
Where the moss'd seat invites the traveller's stay:

That spot, oh, yet it is the very same;
That Hawthorn *gives it shade and gave it* name;
There yet the primrose ope's its earliest bloom,
There yet the violet sheds its first perfume;
And in the branch that rears above the rest,
The Robin unmolested builds its nest."

From Burns, such a shady seat, occupied by whispering lovers, calls forth enthusiastic raptures:—

"*If* Heaven a draught of heavenly pleasure spare,
One cordial in *this melancholy vale*,
'T is when a youthful, loving, modest pair,
In other's arms breathe out the tender tale
Beneath the milk-white Thorn that scents the ev'ning gale."

For one of such a modest pair,

"—— spotless as the flow'ring Thorn,
With flowers so white and leaves so green,
When purest in the dewy morn,"

he promises, that, amongst other floral gifts,

"The Hawthorn I will pu' wi' its locks o' siller grey,

Where, like an aged man, it stands at break
o' day,"

adding with the humanity of a pure lover of nature,

"But the songster's nest within the bush I
winna tak away."

But it is only in highly-cultured Britain, that such shady spots are to be found; or, that every road and path deserves to be called

"—— the Hawthorn-scented way;"
CAMPBELL.

for no other country can boast that lovely diversity which the hedge-rows give to all our cultivated landscapes, making them look, from a distant height, like rich Mosaics.

Even the gorgeous scenery of the East cannot *obliterate* the love for the productions of our native country, and though surrounded by all the sublime and wondrous vegetation of those luxuriant regions, the home-sick heart pants for the green hedge-row and the shady copse; for

"— who in Indian bowers has stood,
But thought on England's 'good greenwood;'

And bless'd, beneath the palmy shade,
Her Hazel and her Hawthorn glade;
And breathed a prayer (how oft in vain!)
To gaze upon her oaks again?"

HEBER.

The peculiar feature which the Hawthorn hedge-rows give to British scenery, is beautifully alluded to by the Rev. G. Croly, when viewing a landscape in France, a country which can rarely boast

"— a Hawthorn hedge, where the sweet May
Has shower'd its white luxuriance:"

L. E. L.

"'T is a rich scene, and yet the richest charm
That ere clothed earth in beauty, lives not here.
Winds no green fence around the cultured farm;
No blossom'd Hawthorn shields the cottage dear:
The land is bright, and yet to thine how drear,
Unrivall'd England! Well the thought may pine
For those sweet fields where, each a little sphere,
In shaded, sacred fruitfulness doth shine,
And the heart higher beats that says, 'This spot is mine.'"

It is not so often that the phenomenon described by Coleridge, is seen as that which we have quoted from Sackville; for mists and fogs are less frequent when

"The moonlight-colour'd May"

SHELLEY.

is in blossom than at any other season of the year. Still if a late south-east wind should blow bringing with it drizzly rain and all the miseries of a "south fog," we may perhaps be able to say,

"There stands the flowering May-thorn tree!
From through the veiling mist you see
The black and shadowy stem;
Smit by the sun the mist in glee
Dissolves to lightsome jewel'ry,
Each blossom hath its gem."

COLERIDGE.

But the "jewel'ry" on the blossom, like gems on a beauteous maiden, is, at this season, rather a defect than an ornament; however much it may lend a brilliancy to the black twigs of the winter-bared stem.

The reader will not fail to notice how few poets have remarked upon the powerful and delicious *scent* of the Hawthorn; a scent which

perfumes the country round, and is often borne by the fitful breeze even into the hearts of large towns; as if it would call the care-worn man of business and the hard-handed mechanic, from the counting-house and the loom, to come and pay it its long-lost honours. We are glad, however, to be able to add one extract which does justice to this attribute of the Hawthorn:—

"—— How sweet to sense,
How delicate the breeze that lades its wings
With odours from the Hawthorn! To the spot
Where dwells the sweet allurer, decking late
Her crowded foliage with abundant flowers,
Turns the fond eye to gaze, and, smit with love,
Marks here, the swelling boughs' expanded bloom,
And there, a host of beauties yet unborn,
Globules unnumber'd the prolific branch
Besetting thick around, ere long to unfold
Their milky petals to th' enamour'd bee."

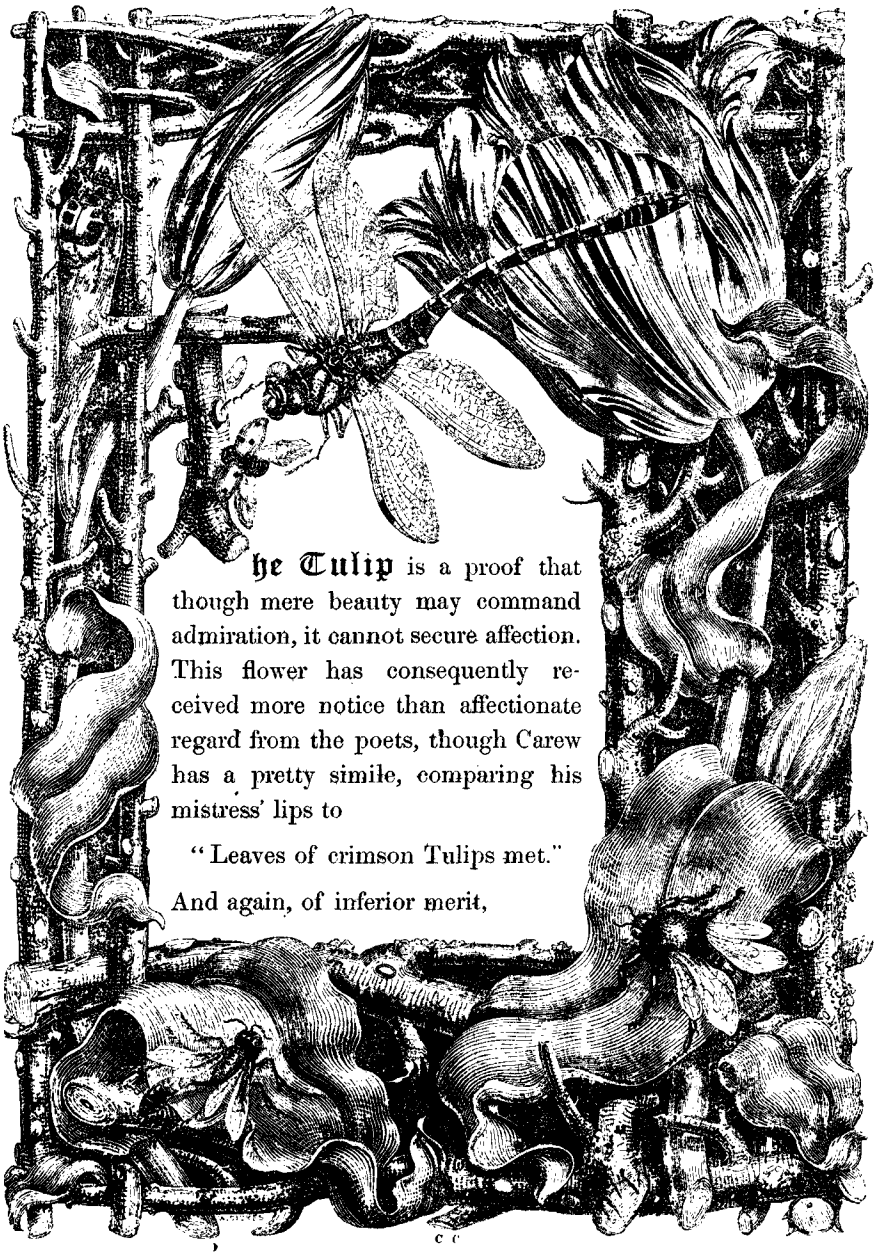
HURDIS.

The Tulip.

TULIPA GESNERIANA.

"An hundredcolour'd silks the Tulip plays."

P. FLETCHER.



The Tulip is a proof that though mere beauty may command admiration, it cannot secure affection. This flower has consequently received more notice than affectionate regard from the poets, though Carew has a pretty simile, comparing his mistress' lips to

"Leaves of crimson Tulips met."

And again, of inferior merit,

"In yonder Tulip go and seek,—
There thou may'st find her lip, her cheek."

Herrick draws the usual moral of short-lived beauty from these highly-prized flowers:—

"You are a Tulip seen to-day,
But dearest, of so short a stay,
That where you grew, scarce man can say."

HERRICK.

TO A BED OF TULIPS.

"Bright Tulips, we do know
You had your coming hither;
And fading-time does show
That ye must quickly wither.

Your sisterhoods may stay,
And smile here for your hour,
But die ye must away,
Even as the meanest flower.

Come, virgins, then, and see
Your frailties, and bemoan ye;
For lost like these, 't will be
As Time had never known ye."

F. Quarles, in one of his "Divine Emblems," adopting Prov. xiv. 13, for his text, cautions against that "mirth whose end is heaviness:"—

"The dainties here
Are least what they appear;
Though sweet in hopes, yet in fruition sour:—
The fairest Tulip's not the sweetest flower."

"The courtier Tulip, gay in clothes,"

FANSHAWE.

or as Cowley describes it, in nearly the same words,

"—— cloth'd in a gay and parti-color'd coat,"

has, from the time of its first introduction, been an object of care and pride to the florist, who anxiously studies to vary its tints in every possible manner. But his chief delight is, when

"—— the fantastic Tulip strives to break
In *twofold* beauty, and a *parted* streak."

PRIOR.

Then does he, enthusiastically,

"—— praise the gaudy Tulip's streaky red:"

GAY.

and then he glories in

" —— the Tulip-race, where Beauty plays
Her idle freaks; from family diffused
To family, as flies the father-dust,
The varied colours run; and while they *break*
On the charm'd eye, th' exulting florist marks,
With secret pride, the wonders of his hand."

THOMSON.

But after all the labour and pains bestowed upon it, it is, perhaps, hardly entitled to any higher praise than that which Churchill yields it:—

" The Tulip, idly glaring to the view,
Who, tho' no clown, his birth from Holland drew,
When once full dress'd, fears from his place to stir:—
The fop of flowers—the More of a parterre."

Young has justly satirized the absurd Tulip-omania, which, in his day, was nearly at its height; though we think that most persons would have felt strongly disposed to treat the malicious old Quaker pretty much in the same way as he treated the Tulip—viz., knocked off his head:—

" But Florio's fame, the product of a shower,
Grows, in his garden, an illustrious flower.
Why teems the earth?—why melt the vernal skies?

Why shines the sun ?—to make Paul Diack* rise.
From morn to night has Florio gazing stood,
And wonder'd how the gods could be so good :—
What shape !—what hue ! Was ever nymph so fair ?
He doats ! he dies !—he, *too*, is *rooted* there.
O solid bliss, which nothing can destroy,—
Except a cat, bird, snail, or idle boy.
In Fame's full bloom lies Florio down at night,
And wakes, next day, a most inglorious wight :—
The Tulip's dead !——

* * * *

Nor are those enemies I mention'd, all ;
Beware, O Florist, thy ambition's fall.
A friend of mine indulged this noble flame ;
A Quaker served him, Adam was his name ;
To one loved Tulip oft the master went,
Hung o'er it, and whole days in rapture spent ;
But came, and miss'd it one ill-fated hour :
He raged ! he roar'd ! 'What *demon* cropt my flower ?'
Serene, quoth Adam, 'Lo ! 'twas crush'd by me ;
Fallen is the Baal to which thou bow'dst thy knee.'"

* The name of a Tulip.

While Young is severe on the male sex, Shenstone is equally so on the female:—

"In glaring Chloe's manlike taste and mien,
Are the gross splendours of the Tulip seen:
Distant they strike, inelegantly gay,
To the near view no pleasing charms display."

Though void of scent and ostentatious as

"The Tulip, tinged with beauty's fairest dyes,"

BLACKLOCK.

certainly is, yet its various and splendid colours deserve admiration when it shines lustrous with

"—— crimson fading into gold,
In streaks of fairest symmetry."

LANGHORNE.

justifying the brief, but poetical, description of Southey,

"—— Tulips, like the ruddy evening streak'd."

It is true that we cannot yield the Tulip much affection, but we may condescend to admire it as, at least, one of Nature's favoured children. Moreover, it should be remembered, that we see it here only as an exotic, contrasting disadvantageously with our sober skies and unostentatious vegeta-

tion. Scattered in wild luxuriance over the plains of the East,

"Where the tints of the earth and the hues of the sky,
In colour though varied, in beauty may vie,"

the Tulip must have a very different appearance from the regimental rows of blazing flowers which shine in the florist's prize-bed. Neither are its natural colours varied and contrasted like those which cultivation has produced.

"With bosom bared to meet the garish day,
The glaring Tulip, gaudy, undismay'd."

MRS. C. SMITH.

is none of Nature's handiworks. It is one of man's "fantastic tricks."

Miss Landon, who is fond of far-fetched fancies, speaks of

"——those rich tints which on the Tulips lie,
Telling their southern birth and sunny sky;
The wine-cups of the sun."

And

"Tulips with every colour which shines
In the radiant gems of Serendib's mines

* * * like wine-cups stored
Round a monarch's festal board."

This brilliant flower, being a native of Turkey, was called Tulipa, from its resemblance to the Eastern head-dress, known as the Tulipân, or Turban; from which circumstance Moore has again compared a host of turbaned Turks to a bed of Tulips:—

"What triumph crowds the rich Divan to-day?
With turban'd heads of every hue and race,—
Like Tulip-beds of different shape and dyes,
Bending beneath th' invisible west-wind's sighs?"

Hyacinths.

LILIUM MARTAGON.

"——Hyacinths, which grow
With marks of grief."

DRUMMOND.

HYACINTHUS NON-SCRIPTUS, *seu*, SCILLA NUTANS.

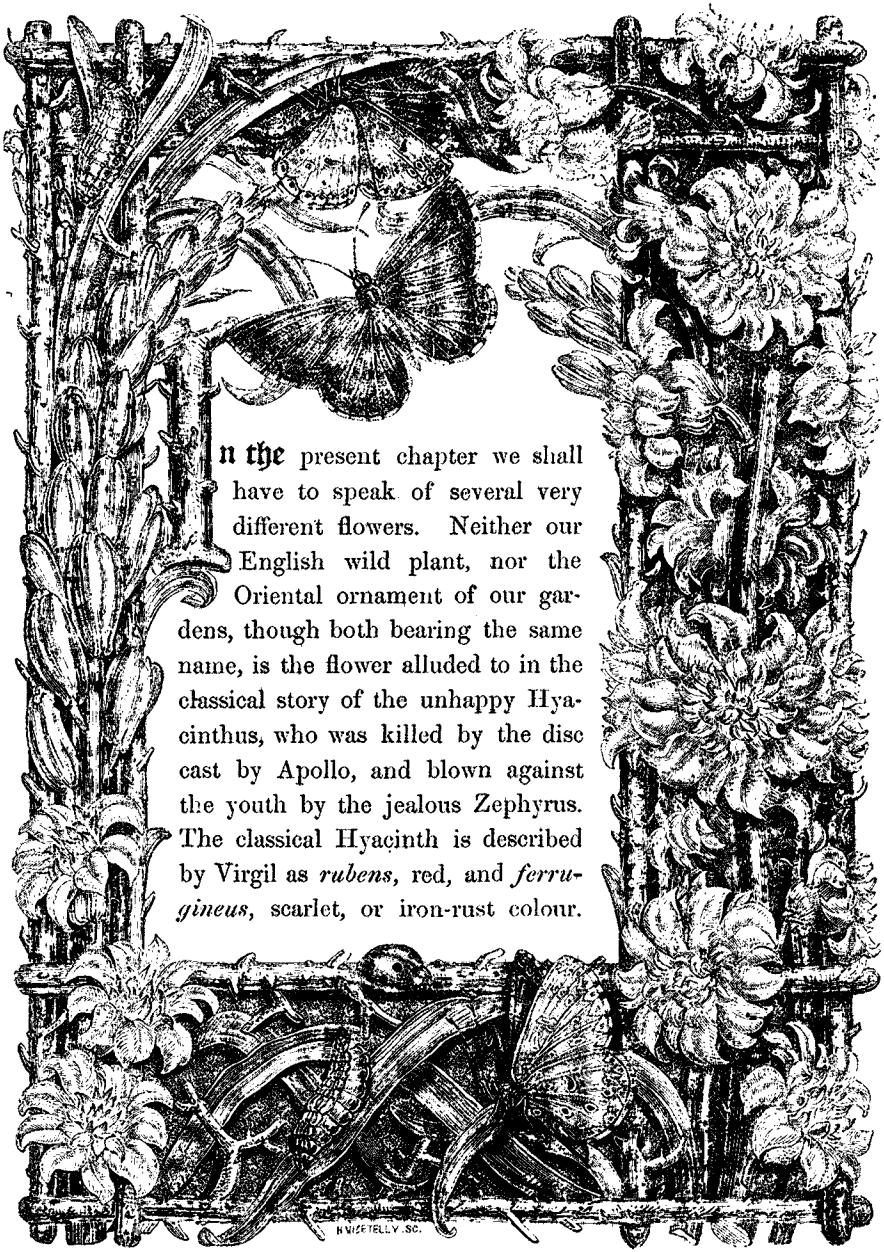
"Shaded Hyacinth alway
Sapphire Queen of the mid-May."

KEATS.

HYACINTHUS ORIENTALIS.

"Hyacinths with their graceful bells,
Where the spirit of odour dwells,
Like the spirit of music in ocean-shells."

L. E. L.



In the present chapter we shall have to speak of several very different flowers. Neither our English wild plant, nor the Oriental ornament of our gardens, though both bearing the same name, is the flower alluded to in the classical story of the unhappy Hyacinthus, who was killed by the disc cast by Apollo, and blown against the youth by the jealous Zephyrus. The classical Hyacinth is described by Virgil as *rubens*, red, and *ferrugineus*, scarlet, or iron-rust colour.

Upon its leaves were said to be inscribed the letters αι, αι, which form the Greek exclamation of sorrow; whence the name of Hyacinthus was derived, Αι and Cynthius one of the titles of Apollo, signifying bewept of Apollo.

Ovid, in the tenth book of his Metamorphoses, refers to this imaginary inscription on the leaves of the Hyacinth:—

"Ipse suos gemitus foliis inscripsit et αι, αι,
Flos habet inscriptum, funestaque litera ducta est."

We look in vain at either of the flowers, bearing the name of Hyacinth, for any explanation of this fancied inscription; and, almost ever since the revival of classical learning, it has been an exercise for the ingenuity of critics to ascertain what flower was meant by the ancient poets.

Writers of our own day have taken to themselves the merit of having discovered it; and it is usual now in most books on flowers to adopt Professor Martyn's hypothesis, and give the name of the poets' Hyacinth to the species of Red Lily called the Martagon. But the merit of the discovery does not belong to the Professor, for long before his time (indeed, ever since the classics were subjected to criticism) one or other of

the numerous Red Lilies has been considered to have been the classical flower; and no early writer, poet or otherwise, ever thought of affixing the character of the classical Hyacinth to any of the flowers popularly called by that name.

The following extract from Gerarde's Herbal (1593) will show that the opinion which maintains that the Greek Hyacinthos is to be found in one of the tribe of Red Lilies, is no modern discovery. In his chapter on the *Lilium aureum*, and *Lilium rubrum*, he thus describes the Gold-red Lily:—

"The Lilium aureum, or the Gold-red Lilly, groweth to the height of two, and sometimes three, cubits, and often higher than those of the common white lilly. The leaves be blacker and narrower, set very thick about the stalke. The flowres in the top be many, from ten to thirty flowres, according to the age of the plant and fertilitie of the soile, like in form and greatnesse to those of the white lilly, but of a red colour tending to saffron, sprinkled or poudered with many little black specks, like to rude or imperfect draughts of certaine letters. The roots be great bulbes, consisting of many cloves, as those of the white lilly. . . . . This is thought by some to be the *Bulbus cruentus* of Hippocrates; as also the *Lilium*

purpureum of Dioscorides: yet Matthiolus and some others would have it his *Hemerocallis.*— Dodonæus and Bapt. Porta think it the *Hyacinthus* and *Cosmosandolos* of the poets."

He then enters into a critique on the various passages in which the Hyacinth is mentioned by the classics, adding, "most of the later herbalists doe call this plant *Hyacinthus poeticus.*"

Some learned commentators have supposed the Gladiolus to have been the flower of the Greek fable; but, although it corresponds in colour, its spots are less conspicuous, and its leaves want the graceful curl for which the Hyacinth was so celebrated. The elegant involutions of the petals of some of the Red Lilies correspond much better with the epithet Hyacinthine locks, than the simple bend of the Gladiolus, or the single curl of the *Hyacinthus orientalis.*

The colour, too, is appropriate to the epithet, for red or auburn was, among the ancients, a favourite hue for the hair; and so likewise all our early poets, from Chaucer to Milton, unite in admiring red or yellow hair. We might cite many passages in support of this assertion, but the following quaint simile by the "father of English poetry" will suffice:—

"Her hair was as yellow of hue
As any basin scoured new."

Lastly, the colour of the stone Hyacinth, or Jacinth, does not accord with any of the hues of the flowers which we know by the same name, but is as nearly identical with that of most varieties of the Red Lily as it is possible for a mineral and vegetable to be.

With all these proofs there can hardly remain a reasonable doubt that some one of the Red Lilies is the flower entitled to the honour which the Hyacinth has so long usurped; and having, as far as may be, settled this weighty matter, we will introduce the few occasions on which it has been mentioned by our poets.

Spenser, who was too deeply imbued with the love of ancient learning to forget the poetical fable of Hyacinthus, more than once alludes to it:—

"So lovedst thou [Phœbus] the lusty Hyacinth,
So lovedst thou the fair Coronis dear;
Yet both are of thy hapless hand extinct,
Yet both in flowers do live, and love thee bear."

Its history made it an appropriate flower

wherewith to adorn the Bower of Adonis, "all about" which

"——— grewe every sort of flower
To which sad lovers were transform'd of yore,
Fresh Hyacinthus, Phœbus' paramour,
And dearest love."

Ben Jonson most nearly describes by a single epithet both the human and the floral Hyacinth, if we assume a reddish-yellow flower, such as the Red Lilies, to be the latter: he calls it

"——— the fair-hair'd Hyacinth."

Drummond bids a lady take warning from

"Dark Hyacinth, of late whose blushing beams
Made all the neighbouring herbs and grass rejoice,
And think how little is 'twixt life's extremes;
The cruel tyrant that did kill those flowers,
Shall once, ah me, not spare that spring of yours.

On another occasion he does little more than translate the lines of Moschus into his Elegy on the death of Henry, Prince of Wales:—

"O Hyacinths! for ay, your AI keep still,
Nay, with more marks of woe your leaves now fill."

In the same Elegy he *again mentions the* classical Hyacinth, as

"——— that sweet flower that bears
In sanguine spots the tenor of our woes."

Lines which Milton adopted, but at the same time corrected, by transferring the epithet "sanguine" from the spots (which are black) to the flower:—

"——— that sanguine flower inscribed with woe."

Milton seems to have been aware that the "flower inscribed with woe" was not that which is popularly termed the Hyacinth, for in every instance in which he introduces that name, he evidently means our English Harebell.

In Parnell we find an instance of the ignorance of flowers which prevailed in the eighteenth century, and caused the signification of many (like the Hyacinth) to be lost. Describing several classical plants, he says,

"In bells of *azure*, Hyacinth arose."

We do not think that the subject was again mentioned, until Keats, revelling on classic ground, tells of

"——— the sad death
Of Hyacinthus, when the cruel breath
Of Zephyr slew him,—Zephyr penitent
Who now, ere Phœbus mounts the firmament,
Fondles the flower amid the sobbing rain."

Yet we cannot sympathize with him when he prays

"——— for Hermes' wand
To touch this flower into human shape!
That woodland Hyacinthus could escape
From his green prison!"

We decidedly prefer the flower (whatever it may be) to the young gentleman.

Shelley is less happy in his classical imitation:—

"——— the *blue* bells
Of Hyacinth tell Apollo's written grief."

But it is to these "blue bells," the *Hyacinthus* NON *scriptus*, or as modern botanists term it *Scilla*, that we now turn with pleasure from the fictions of the ancients. However much we may

admire the latter in the closet or the study, there cannot be a question that there is more healthy enjoyment to be found under the open canopy of heaven reading the handwriting of Almighty God in our own delicate Harebell, than in poring over the most fanciful creations of the fabulist, whether ancient or modern.

A doubt hangs over the poetical history of the modern, as well as of the ancient flower, owing to the appellation "Harebell" being indiscriminately applied both to *Scilla*, wild Hyacinth, and also to *Campanula rotundifolia*, Blue-bell. Though southern Bards have occasionally misapplied the word "Harebell," it will facilitate our understanding which flower is meant, if we bear in mind as a general rule that that name is applied differently in various parts of the island; thus, the Harebell of Scotch writers is the *Campanula*, and the Blue-bell, so celebrated in Scottish song, is the wild Hyacinth, or *Scilla;* while in England the same names are used conversely; the Campanula being the Blue-bell, and the wild Hyacinth the Harebell.

From Gerarde and other floricultural works written about the time of Shakspere, we learn that there was then no hesitation in applying the

word Harebell to the wild Hyacinth: consequently there can be no doubt that it is the flower intended by that poet, when he says of Imogen,

"——— Thou shalt not lack
The azured Harebell, like thy veins."

The same epithet "azured" is applied to the "Harebell" by Drayton, who also alludes to its "luscious smell."

Blue, has ever been decreed the colour of constancy; hence the Harebell, as well as the Violet, has been selected to represent that quality:—

"The Harebell, for the stainless azured hue,
Claims to be worn of none but those are true."

W. BROWNE.

And this, by a long leap, brings us at once to Burns, who has almost an identical line:—

"The Hyacinth's for constancy, wi' its unchanging blue."

Burns also beautifully describes the natural locality of the wild Hyacinth, which, unlike the heath-loving *Campanula*, prefers damp, shady situations:—

" —— the lone glen o' green breckan,
Wi' the burn stealing under the lang yellow broom,
Where the Blue-bell and gowan lurk lowly unseen."

If we turn to England's poets, we find the locality of their Harebell equally well designated:

" —— fountains all bordered with moss,
Where the Harebells and violets grow;"

SHENSTONE.

so likewise in

" the woods ——
Where spicy Hyacinths azure bells unfold;"

J. SCOTT.

and in the same situation Mrs. C. Smith says,

" Uncultured bells of azure Jacinths blow;"

as well as by

" —— the brooks whose humid banks
Nourish the Harebell;"

and again,

" In the lone copse, or shadowy dell,
Wild cluster'd knots of Harebells blow."

The wild Hyacinth may likewise often be found

"'Mid some green plot of open ground;
Wide as the oak extends its dewy gloom,
The fostered Hyacinths spread their purple bloom."

WORDSWORTH.

We have hitherto endeavoured to confine ourselves to the wild Hyacinth (*Scilla*); and the foregoing extracts relating to that flower, together with the following relating to the *Campanula*, will bear out our assertions respecting the names and localities of the two flowers. Allan Ramsay, in his inimitable "Gentle Shepherd," the only real pastoral poem in the language, introduces us to the *Campânula*, under a name which at once fixes its haunting place:—

"When corn-riggs' waved yellow, and blue Heather-bells
Bloom'd bonny on muirland and sweet rising fells;"

and Mickle, in the introductory lines to "Sir Martyn, a Poem in the manner of Spenser," —lines which have received the high approbation of Sir Walter Scott,—describes the Scottish Harebell as growing in an open dry situation enough:—

"On Desmond's mouldering turrets slowly shake
The trembling rye-grass and the Harebell blue."

Burns adds his undeniable testimony,

"—— little Harebells o'er the *lea*."

It is the same flower under its English designation which is mentioned by H. K. White:—

"Dim is my upland path, ——
Where knots of Blue-bells droop their graceful heads;"

and by Mrs. C. Smith:—

"—— in the breeze
That wafts the thistle's plumed seed along,
Blue-bells wave tremulous."

And this too is the flower (changing the name as we return to the North) in reference to which Scott, speaking of Ellen Douglass, felicitously transfers Milton's description of the fairy tread of Sabrina "o'er the Cowslip's velvet head," to the land of the heather:—

"E'en the slight Harebell raised its head,
Elastic from her airy tread."

Ellen—whose lovely image still haunts the imaginative traveller as he wanders over the now classic ground of Loch Katrine—modestly chose the "slight Harebell" as an emblem of herself:

"'For me,' she stoop'd, and looking round,
Pluck'd a blue Harebell from the ground;
'For me, whose memory scarce conveys
An image of more splendid days,
This little flower, that loves the lea,
May well my simple emblem be;
It drinks heaven's dews as blithe as rose
That in the King's own garden grows;
And when I place it in my hair,
Allan, a bard is bound to swear
He ne'er saw coronet so fair.'—
Then playfully the chaplet wild
She wreath'd in her dark locks, and smiled."

So far there is no confusion, and if the reader is sometimes puzzled by the similarity of names for two different plants, he may generally satisfy himself which is intended by ascertaining what countryman the poet was, or still more certainly by noticing the locality described when the flower is mentioned. But modern poets have *wrought* confusion and difficulty by a wrong-

ful application of the names; thus if Keats had in the two following quotations written "Harebells" for "Blue-bells," and *vice versâ*, he would have conformed to the usages of his native country; for it is very evident that in the first the wild Hyacinth is meant:—

"—— a spring-head of clear waters,
Babbling so sweetly of its lovely daughters,
The spreading Blue-bells, it may haply mourn
That such fair clusters should be rudely torn
From their fresh beds; and scatter'd thoughtlessly
By infant hands, left on the path to die."

And it is equally clear that in the next, the *Campanula* is intended:—

"—— swelling downs, where sweet air stirs
Blue Harebells lightly, and where prickly furze
Buds lavish gold."

It is not so clear, however, which flower Shelley intends by his poetical description of

"—— tender Blue-bells, at whose birth
The sod scarce heaved."

Another flower bearing the name of Hyacinth, is the *Hyacinthus orientalis;* not only

"—— Hyacinths of purest virgin white,
Low-bent, and blushing inwards;"

THOMSON.

but of all hues,

"—— Hyacinths of loveliest dyes,
Breathing of heaven"

MRS. C. SMITH.

This is the flower which Mrs. Tighe invokes "at the commencement of Spring;"

"Burst from thy leafy sheath once more,
Bright Hyacinth! thy splendour showing,
The sun thy hues shall now restore
In all their foreign lustre glowing."

It is not surprising that flowers of so much beauty and variety of tint should secure admiration; flowers, which have been so sweetly celebrated by many modern poets, and among others by Shelley:—

"The Hyacinth, purple, and white, and blue,
Which flung from its bells a sweet peal anew,
Of music so delicate, soft, and intense,
It was felt like an odour within the sense."

The Narcissus.

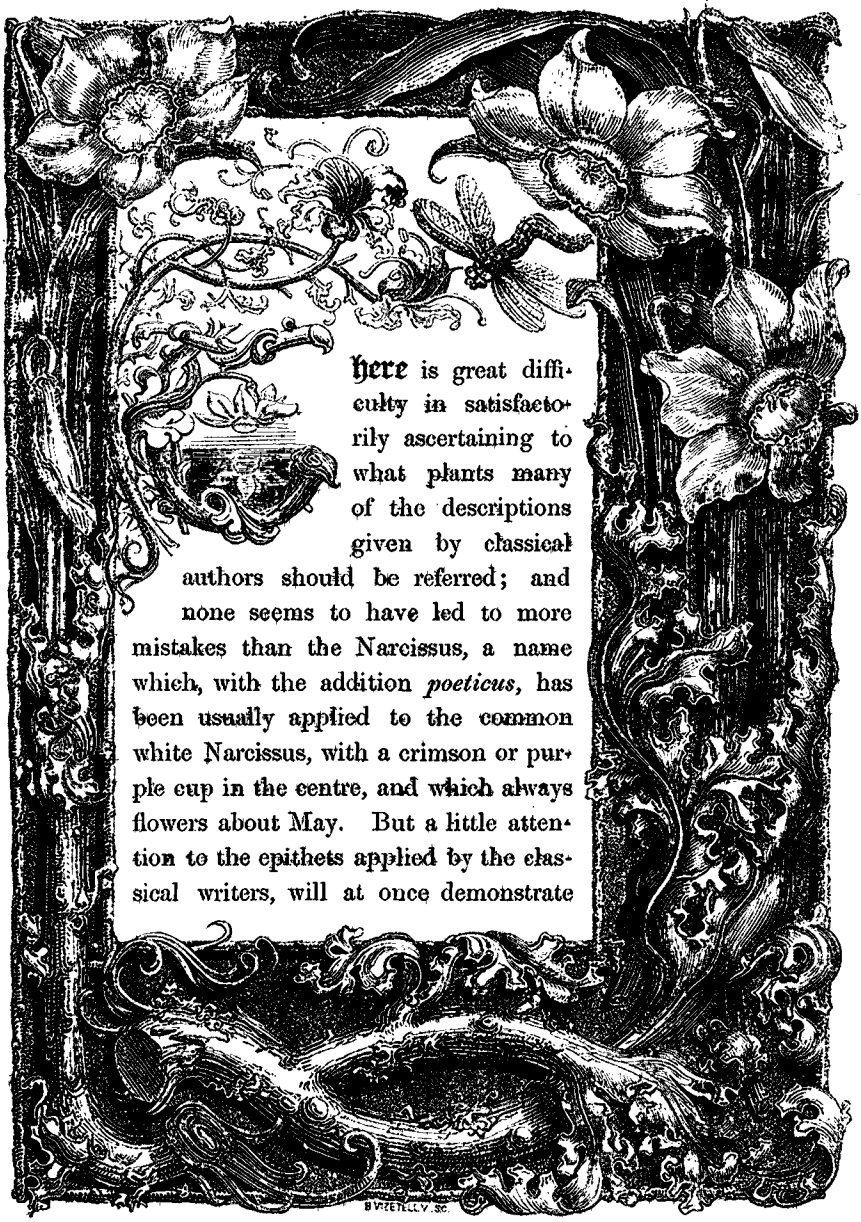
NARCISSUS POETICUS.

"—— Narcissus fair,
As o'er the fabled fountain hanging still."

THOMSON.

"—— Narcissi, the fairest among them all,
Who gaze on their eyes in the stream's recess,
Till they die of their own dear loveliness."

SHELLEY.



There is great difficulty in satisfactorily ascertaining to what plants many of the descriptions given by classical authors should be referred; and none seems to have led to more mistakes than the Narcissus, a name which, with the addition *poeticus*, has been usually applied to the common white Narcissus, with a crimson or purple cup in the centre, and which always flowers about May. But a little attention to the epithets applied by the classical writers, will at once demonstrate

that this cannot be the flower to which they referred. Virgil calls it the purple Narcissus,* and "the Narcissus flowering late,"† amongst other autumnal plants; and Pliny also describes it as having "a purple flower."‡ Moreover, almost all the flowers which are said to have sprung from the blood of defunct heroes, are of a purple or red colour; such are the Flos Adonis, the Hyacinth of the poets, the Red Rose, the *Crocus officinale*, or Meadow Saffron, and many others. Shakspere also adopts the same idea when he describes the Heart's-ease as turned "purple with love's wound."

The Narcissus has rarely been noticed by our poets save in connection with the classical story of the youth beloved by Echo, and pining to death for love of his own image reflected in the spring, on whose banks he was reposing.

Spenser appropriately plants the Narcissus around lovers' bowers, under the descriptions of

"Foolish Narcisse, that likes the watery shore;"

and

* Purpureo Narcisso. Ecl. v. l. 38.
† Sera comantem Narcissum. Geor. Lib. IV. l. 48.
‡ Purpureo flore.

" —— pale Narcisse, that in a well
Seeing his beauty, in love with it fell."

In like manner Drummond places lovers' flowers together:—

" Here Adon blushed, and Clitia all amazed
Look'd pale, with Him who in the fountain gazed."

Ben Jonson's lines on this subject are a fine specimen of the classical vigour of his verse:—

" Arise, and speak thy sorrows, Echo, rise!
Here by this fountain where thy love did pine,
Whose memory lives fresh to vulgar fame,
Shrined in this *yellow* flower, that bears his name.
Echo. His name revives, and lifts me up from earth;—
See, see, the mourning fount, whose springs weep yet
Th' untimely fate of that too beauteous boy,
That trophy of self-love, and spoil of Nature,
Who (now transform'd into this drooping flower)
Hangs the repentant head back from the stream,
As if it wish'd—'Would I had never look'd
In such a flattering mirror!' Oh, Narcissus!
Thou that wast once (and yet art) my Narcissus,
Had Echo but been private with thy thoughts,
She would have dropt away herself in tears,

Till she had all turn'd water, that in her
(As in a truer glass) thou mightst have gazed,
And seen thy beauties by more kind reflection!
* * * * * *
Slow, slow, fresh fount, keep time with my salt tears;
Yet slower, yet, Oh faintly, gentle springs!
List to the heavy part the music bears,
Woe weeps out her division, when she sings.
Droop herbs and flowers;
Fall grief in showers;
Our beauties are not ours;
Oh, I could still,
Like melting snow upon some craggy hill,
Drop, drop, drop, drop,
Since Nature's pride is now a wither'd Daffodil."

We have rather extended this quotation, in order to show that the fable of Narcissus was sometimes applied to the common Daffodil; and it is probable that Milton also uses the English word for the classical flower: inasmuch as he connects it with the Amaranth, which was also fabled by the Greeks to have sprung from the blood of an unhappy lover:—

"Bid Amaranthus all his beauty shed,
And Daffodillies fill their cups with tears."

Parnell mentions the fabulous flower:—

"—— O'er the margin hung
The self-admirer, white Narcissus, so
Fades at the brink, his picture fades below."

As does Somerville:—

"On her refulgent brow, as crystal clear,
As Parian marble smooth, Narcissus hangs
His drooping head, and views his image there;
Unhappy flower!"

Gay relates the story:—

"Here young Narcissus o'er the fountain stood,
And view'd his image in the crystal flood:
The crystal flood reflects his lovely charms,
And the pleased image strives to meet his arms.
No nymph his unexperienced breast subdued,
Echo in vain the flying boy pursued;
Himself alone, the foolish youth admires,
And with fond look the smiling shade desires;
O'er the smooth lake with fruitless tears he grieves,
His spreading fingers shoot in verdant leaves,
Through his pale veins green sap now gently flows,
And in a short-lived flower his beauty blows."

Although the fable has been alluded to by

several later poets, none of them has attached to it a new thought, or invested an old one with new beauty; it is therefore unnecessary to fill our pages with uninteresting repetitions. Keats, however, has changed the idea usually connected with the Narcissus; and his very beautiful lines may therefore here find a place:—

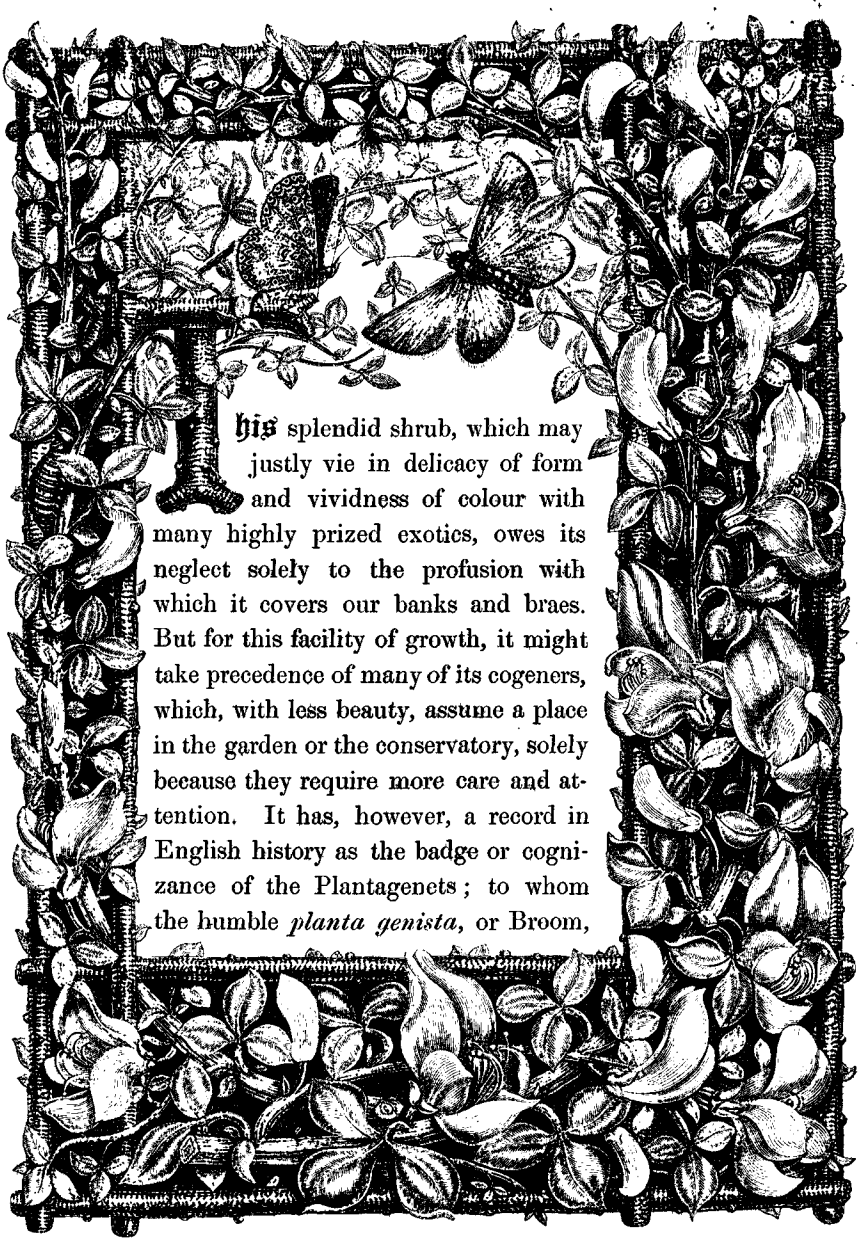
"What first inspired a bard of old to sing
Narcissus pining o'er the untainted spring?
In some delicious ramble he had found
A little space with boughs all woven round;
And, in the midst of all, a clearer pool
Than e'er reflected in its pleasant cool
The blue sky, here and there serenely peeping,
Through tendril wreaths fantastically creeping;
And on the bank a lonely flower he spied,
A meek and forlorn flower with nought of pride,
Drooping its beauty o'er the watery clearness,
To woo its own sad image into nearness:
Deaf to light Zephyrus it would not move,
But still would seem to droop, to pine, to love.
So while the poet stood in this sweet spot,
Some fainter gleamings o'er his fancy shot;
Nor was it long ere he had told the tale
Of young Narcissus and sad Echo's bale."

The Broom.

SPARTIUM SCOPARIUM.

"O'er the fields of waving Broom,
Slowly shoots the golden bloom."

J. WARTON.



This splendid shrub, which may justly vie in delicacy of form and vividness of colour with many highly prized exotics, owes its neglect solely to the profusion with which it covers our banks and braes. But for this facility of growth, it might take precedence of many of its cogeners, which, with less beauty, assume a place in the garden or the conservatory, solely because they require more care and attention. It has, however, a record in English history as the badge or cognizance of the Plantagenets; to whom the humble *planta genista*, or Broom,

gave that haughty name, written in letters of blood on many a sad page of England's archives.

We might have expected that Chaucer would have furnished us with some lengthened eulogy on this plant, as "Old John of Gaunt, time-honor'd Lancaster," was his patron, and as yet the aspirations of that proud house to England's throne were unknown; but he merely mentions, without comment, or epithet,

"—— flowre of Brome."

We, therefore, pass to Spenser, who, in the sonnet in which he catalogues various plants compounded of good and ill, says,

"Sweet is the Broom flower, but yet sour enough;
* * * * *
So every sweet with sour is tempred still."

Shakspere tells of

"—— Broom groves,
Whose shadow the dismiss'd bachelor loves,
Being lass-lorn."

W. Browne just mentions

"—— a field of yellow Broom,"

where, as Dyer says,

" ——— low-tufted Broom,
Or box, or berry'd juniper arise ;"

or where

" Flexile Brooms bright yellow interpose."

J. SCOTT.

J. Cunningham is a little fuller when he describes himself as surveying " the Landscape :"—

" Stretched upon these banks of Broom,
We command the prospect round : ———
Meadows, woodlands, heaths, and fields,
Yellow'd o'er with waving gold."

Such a spot and such a soothing recreation as that to which Fergusson delighted to escape from the annoyances of Edinburgh :—

" From noisy bustle, from contention free,
Far from the busy town I careless loll ;
Not like swain Tityrus, or the bards of old,
Under a beechen, venerable shade,
But on a furzy heath, where blooming Broom
And thorny whins the spacious plains adorn."

Dr. Leyden,—the friend of Sir W. Scott,—likewise says of himself,

"I love to * * * *
* wande('mid the dark-green fields of Broom,
When peers in scatter'd tufts the yellow bloom."

So also Burns loved the Broom-groves, though for other reasons:—

"Their groves o' sweet myrtle let foreign lands reckon,
Where bright-beaming summers exalt the perfume;
Far dearer to me yon lone glen o' green breckan,
Wi' the burn stealing under the lang yellow Broom.

Far dearer to me are yon humble Broom bowers,
Where the blue-bell and gowan lurk lowly unseen;
For there, lightly tripping among the wild flowers,
A listening the linnet, oft wanders my Jean."

The first full description of this beautiful native plant is by Langhorne, who teaches from it the *cui bono* of the simply beautiful:—

"——— 'Tis not in vain
That Nature paints her works so gay;

For, fruitless though that fairy Broom,
Yet still we love her lavish bloom.
Cheer'd with that bloom, yon desert wild
Its native horrors lost, and smiled;
And oft we mark her golden ray
Along the dark wood scatter day.

Whatever charms the ear or eye,
All beauty and all harmony;
If sweet sensations they produce,
I know they have their moral use;
I know that Nature's charms can move
The springs that strike to Virtue's love."

Cowper is briefer, yet sufficient:—

"—— *the Broom,*
Yellow and bright, as bullion unalloy'd,
Her blossoms:"

and we may add one or two more equally brief descriptions from modern poets. Miss Landon says,

"The wilding Broom as sweet, which gracefully
Flings its long tresses like a maiden's hair
Waving in yellow beauty;"

and Wordsworth,

"——— the Broom
Full-flower'd, and visible on every steep,
Along the copses runs in veins of gold."

But Wordsworth likewise enables the plant to pass a just eulogy on itself:—

"—— am I not
In truth a favour'd plant?
On me such bounty summer pours,
That I am cover'd o'er with flowers;
And, when the frost is in the sky,
My branches are so fresh and gay
That you might look at me and say,
This Plant can never die.

The butterfly, all green and gold,
To me hath often flown,
Here in my blossoms to behold
Wings lovely as his own.
When grass is chill with rain or dew,
Beneath my shade the mother-ewe
Lies with her infant lamb; I see
The love they to each other make,
And the sweet joy which they partake,
It is a joy to me."

The Rose.

ROSA.

"A costly crown with clarified stonis bright,
This comely Queen did on head inclose,
While all the land illumyned of the light;
Wherefore me thought the flowers did rejoice,
Crying attonis, 'Hail be thou richest Rose!
Hail herbis' Empress, hail freshest Queen of Flowers,
To thee be glory and honor at all hours.'"

DUNBAR.

In this chapter we propose to treat of the Rose *par excellence*, the garden queen, leaving such passages as relate to its wild congener to a separate chapter. So innumerable have been the poetical tributes paid to the Rose, that we have been obliged to reject most of those entire pieces which are mere imitations, or slight variations on

the same idea; and as this is the character of the great mass, we shall thus be enabled, without any loss to the reader, to reduce our extracts into a reasonable compass.

Sir Walter Raleigh, in the character of an amorous shepherd, thus addresses the Roses:—

" Vermilion Roses, that with new day's rise
Display your crimson folds fresh looking fair,
Whose radiant bright disgraces
The rich adorned rays of roseate rising morn!
Ah, if her virgin's hand
Do pluck your purse, ere Phœbus view the land,
And veil your gracious pomp in lovely Nature's scorn;
If chance my mistress traces
Fast by your flowers to take the Summer's air,
Then woful blushing tempt her glorious eyes
To spread their tears, Adonis' death reporting,
And tell Love's torments, sorrowing for her friend,
Whose drops of blood, within your leaves consorting,
Report fair Venus' moans to have no end!

Then may Remorse, in pitying of my smart,
Dry up my tears, and dwell within her heart."

Spenser, when describing the Garden of Bliss, first introduced into the language the classical metaphor of the fleeting nature of the Rose, as affording an argument to enjoy life while youth lasts; and his treatment of it forcibly contrasts with the imitations which the coffee-house poets of a later date successively concocted. The great disparity which exists between the Elizabethan and the metaphysical poets in the treatment of flowers is manifest at every step; but the Rose displays it most clearly, as almost every ten years from Spenser's day to the present, the same metaphor has been the subject of distinct effusions.

Spenser's often imitated lines are as follow; but it must be remembered that they are put into the mouth of one of the frail damsels in the Bower of Bliss, and therefore were not intended by the poet to convey a precept to be followed:—

"Ah! see, whoso faire thing doest faine to see,
In springing flowre the image of thy day;
Ah! see the virgin Rose, how sweetly shee
Doth first peepe forth with bashful modestee,

That fairer seems the lesse ye see her may;
Lo! see soone after, how more bold and free,
Her bared bosome she dothe broad display;
Lo! see soone after how she fades and falls away!

So passeth, in the passing of a day,
Of mortal life the leafe, the bud, the flowre;
No more doth florish after first decay,
That erst was sought to deck both bed and bowre
Of many a lady, and many a paramoure;
Gather therefore the Rose whilst yet is prime,
For soone comes age that will her pride deflowre;
Gather the Rose of Love whilst yet is time,
Whilst loving thou may'st loved be with equal crime."

So far was Spenser from seeking to convey an immoral lesson from

"The Rose engrained in pure scarlet dye,"

that he selects it as an emblem of chastity worn by the pure Belphœbe:—

"That dainty Rose, the daughter of her Morne,
More deare than life shee tendered, whose flowre
The girlond of her honour did adorne:
Ne suffred she the mid-dayes scorching power,

Ne the sharp northerne wind thereon to showre,
But lapped up her silken leaves most chaire,
When-so the froward sky began to lowre:
But soon as calmed was the crystall ayre,
She did it faire disspred, and let to florish faire."

How exquisitely beautiful, too, is the following descriptive simile:—

"Like as a tender Rose in open plaine,
That with untimely drought nigh wither'd was,
And hung the head, soon as few drops of raine
Thereon distill and dew her dainty face,
'Gins to look up, and with fresh wonted grace
Dispreads the glory of her leavès gay;
Such was Irena's countenance."

DANIEL.

"Look, Delia, how w' esteem the half-blown Rose,
The image of thy blush and summer's honor!
Whilst yet her tender bud doth undisclose
That full of beauty time bestows upon her.
No sooner spreads her glory in the air,
But straight her wide-blown pomp comes to decline;
She then is scorn'd that late adorn'd the fair:

So fade the Roses of those cheeks of thine!
No April can revive *thy* wither'd flowers,
Whose springing grace adorns thy glory now;
Swift speedy time, feather'd with flying hours,
Dissolves the beauty of the fairest brow.
Then do not thou such treasure waste in vain;
But love now, whilst thou mayst be loved again."

Shakspere has numerous allusions to the Rose, though some of the most beautiful relate to the Canker, or wild Rose. The garden Rose he most frequently assigns as an emblem of woman:—

"*Duke.*—For women are as Roses; whose fair flower,
Being once display'd, doth fall that very hour.
"*Viola.*—And so they are: alas! that they are so;
To die even when they to perfection grow."

So the gallant Boyet says:—

"Fair ladies mask'd, are Roses in their bud;
Dismask'd, their damask sweet commixture shown,
Are angels vailing clouds, or Roses blown."

And again, metaphorically :—

"Thrice blessed they that master so their blood,
To undergo such maiden pilgrimage;
But earthlier happy is the Rose distill'd,
Than that which withering on the virgin thorn,
Grows, lives, and dies, in single blessedness."

The brother of Ophelia lovingly calls her

"O Rose of May!"

And in "The Passionate Pilgrim" the poet again applies the Rose in a similar manner:—

"Sweet Rose, fair flower, untimely pluck'd, soon faded;
Pluck'd in the bud, and faded in the spring."

A different but equally beautiful metaphor describes the sleeping princes who were murdered in the Tower:—

"—— thus lay the gentle babes
* * * girdling one another
Within their alabaster innocent arms:
Their lips were four red Roses on a stalk,
And in their summer beauty, kiss'd each other."

SONG.

"On a day (alack the day!)
Love, whose month is ever May,
Spied a blossom, passing fair,
Playing in the wanton air:
Through the velvet leaves the wind,
All unseen, 'gan passage find;
That the lover, sick to death,
Wish'd himself the heaven's breath.
'Air,' quoth he, 'thy cheeks may blow;
Air, would I might triumph so!
But, alack, my hand is sworn,
Ne'er to pluck thee from thy thorn:
Vow, alack, for youth unmeet!
Youth so apt to pluck a sweet.
Do not call it *sin* in me,
That I am forsworn for thee:
Thou for whom Jove would swear
Juno but an Ethiop were;
And deny himself for Jove,
Turning mortal for thy love.'"

SONNET

"O, how much more doth beauty beauteous seem,
By that sweet ornament which truth doth give!

The Rose looks fair, but fairer we it deem
For that sweet odour which doth in it live.
The canker-blooms have full as deep a dye
As the perfumed tincture of the Roses;
Hang on such thorns, and play as wantonly,
When summer's breath their masked buds discloses;
But, for their virtue only is their show,
They live unwoo'd, and unrespected fade;
Die to themselves. Sweet Roses do not so;
Of their sweet deaths are sweetest odours made:
And so of you, beauteous and lovely youth;
When that shall fade, my verse distils your truth."

SIR JOHN DAVIES.

AN ACROSTIC TO ELISABETHA REGINA.

"E ye of the garden, Queen of flowers,
L ove's cup wherein lie nectar's powers,
I ngender'd first of nectar;
S weet nurse-child of the spring's young hours,
A nd beauty's fair character.
B est jewel that the earth doth wear,
E v'n when the brave young sun draws near,
T o her hot love pretending;
H imself likewise like form doth bear,
A t rising and descending.

R ose of the Queen of Love beloved,
E ngland's great kings, divinely moved,
G ave Roses in their banner;
I t show'd that beauty's Rose indeed,
N ow in this age should them succeed,
And reign in more sweet manner."

GILES FLETCHER.

"Love is the blossom where there blows
Every thing that lives or grows:
Love doth make the heavens to move,
And the sun doth burn in love:
Love the strong and weak doth yoke,
And makes the ivy climb the oak.

* * * *

See, see the flowers that below,
Now as fresh as morning blow,
And of all, the virgin Rose,
That as bright Aurora shows:
How they all unleavèd die,
Losing their virginity;
Like unto a summer-shade,
But now born, and now they fade
Every thing doth pass away,
There is danger in delay:
Come, come gather then the Rose,
Gather it, or it you lose."

Drummond has three pieces on the Rose, which he calls

"——the garden's Eye, the flower of flowers,
With purple pomp that dazzle doth the sight."

And again,

"Queen of the Fields, whose blush makes blush the morn!
Sweet Rose!"

But only one is worth extracting; it is, however, one of the best of his almost unrivalled Sonnets:—

"Look as the flow'r which ling'ringly doth fade,
The morning's darling late, the summer's Queen,
Spoil'd of that juice which kept it fresh and green,
As high as it did raise, bows low the head,
(Right so the pleasures of my life being dead,
Or in their contraries but only seen,)
With swifter speed declines than erst it spread,
And, blasted, scarce now shows what it hath been;
Therefore, as doth the pilgrim, whom the night
Hastes darkly to imprison on his way,
Think on thy home, my soul! and think aright,
Of what 's yet left thee of life's wasting day;

The sun posts westward, passed is thy morn,
And twice it is not given thee to be born."

W. Browne derives two very beautiful similes from the "Queen of Flowers, the English Rose."

The first is of a kiss:—

"To her Amyntas
Came, and saluted; never man before
More blest, nor like this kiss hath been another
But when two dangling cherries kist each other;
Nor ever beauties, like, met at such closes,
But in the kisses of two damask Roses."

The other serves to illustrate his lamentation over the death of a young friend, whose untimely fate he compares to the blighted flower:—

"Look as a sweet Rose fairly budding forth
Betrays her beauties to th' enamour'd morn,
Until some keen *blast from the envious north*
Kills the sweet bud that was but newly born:
Or else, her rarest smells delighting,
Makes her herself betray,
Some white and curious hand inviting
To pluck her thence away."

W. BROWNE.

"A Rose, as fair as ever saw the north,
Grew in a little garden all alone;
A sweeter flower did Nature ne'er put forth,
Nor fairer garden yet was never known:
And maidens danced about it more and more,
And learned bards of it their ditties made;
The nimble fairies, by the pale-faced moon,
Water'd the roots, and kiss'd her pretty shade.
But, well-a-day! the gard'ner careless grew;
The maids and fairies both were kept away;
And in a drought the caterpillars threw
Themselves upon the bud and every spray:
God shield the stock! if heaven send me supplies,
The fairest blossom of the garden dies."

HERRICK.

TO THE VIRGINS TO MAKE MUCH OF TIME.

"Gather ye Rose-buds while ye may,
Old time is still a flying;
And this same flower that smiles to-day,
To-morrow will be dying.
The glorious lamp of heaven, the sun,
The higher he's a getting,
The sooner will his race be run,
And nearer he's to setting.

The age is best which is the first,
When youth and blood are warmer;
But being spent, the worse and worst
Times still succeed the former.

Then be not coy, but use your time,
And, while ye may, go marry;
For having lost but once your prime,
You may for ever tarry."

TO THE ROSE.

"Go, happy Rose, and interwove
With other flowers bind my love;
Tell her, too, she must not be
Longer flowing, longer free,
That so oft has fetter'd me.

Say (if she's fretful) I have bands
Of pearl, and gold, to bind her hands;
Tell her, if she struggle still,
I have myrtle rods, at will,
For to tame, tho' not to kill.

Take thou my blessing, thus, and go,
And tell her this—*but do not so*,
Lest a handsome anger fly,
Like a lightning, from her eye,
And burn thee up, as well as I."

D'AVENANT.

[A BRIDE.]

"Roses, till ripe and ready to be blown,
Their beauty hide, whilst it is yet their own;
'Tis our's but in expectance, whilst th' are green;
And bashfully they blush when first 't is seen,
As if to spread their beauty were a crime;
A fault in them, not in all-ripening time.
So stands (hidden with veils) in all her pride
Of early flourishing, the bashful bride."

CRASHAW.

[ON TWINS.]

"So have I seen * * *
Two silken sister-flowers consult, and lay
Their bashful cheeks together: newly they
Peep'd from their buds, show'd like the garden's eyes,
Scarce waked; like was the crimson of their joys,
Like were the tears they wept, so like that one
Seem'd but the other's kind reflection."

[ON THE DEATH OF A FRIEND.]

"I've seen indeed the hopeful bud
Of a ruddy Rose, that stood

Blushing to behold the ray
Of the new-saluted day;
(His tender top not fully spread;)
The sweet dash of a shower new shed,
Invited him no more to hide
Within himself the purple pride
Of his forward flower, when lo,
While he sweetly 'gan to shew
His swelling glories, Auster spied him;
Cruel Auster thither hied him,
And, with the rush of one rude blast,
Shamed not spitefully to waste
All his leaves, so fresh, so sweet.
And lay them trembling at his feet."

SIR RICHARD FANSHAWE.

"Thou blushing Rose! within whose virgin leaves
The wanton wind to sport himself presumes;
While from their rifled wardrobe he receives
For his wings purple, for his breath perfumes."

"Blown in the morning, thou shalt fade ere noon;
What boots a life which in such haste forsakes thee?
Thou 'rt wondrous frolic, being to die so soon,
And passing proud a little colour makes thee!

"If thee thy brittle beauty so deceives,
Know then the thing that swells thee is thy bane;
For the same beauty doth in bloody leaves
The sentence of thy early death contain:
Some clown's coarse lungs will poison thy sweet flower,
If by the careless plough thou shalt be torn;
And many Herods lie in wait each hour,
To murder thee as soon as thou art born;
Nay, *force* thy bud to blow, their tyrant breath
Anticipating life to hasten death."

Milton says that it was the delight of Eve to *train the Roses which adorned* the myrtle bowers of Paradise, where flourished

"Flowers of all hue, and without thorn the Rose."

She, therefore, on the fatal morning which lost a world, proposed to leave Adam to other labours,

"—— while I
In yonder spring of Roses, intermix'd
With myrtle, find what to redress till noon;"

and there the prowling Serpent found her, alone

and unprotected, and exposed in all the weakness of female vanity and self-confidence to the sophistry of his wily tongue :—

"Beyond his hope, Eve separate he spies,
Veil'd in a cloud of fragrance, where she stood,
Half spied, so thick the Roses blushing round
About her glow'd, oft stooping to support
Each flower of slender stalk, whose head, though gay,
Carnation, purple, azure, or speck'd with gold,
Hung drooping unsustain'd; them she upstays
With myrtle band; mindless the while
Herself, tho' fairest, unsupported flower,
From her best prop so far, and storm so nigh."

RICHARD LOVELACE.

THE ROSE.

"Sweet, serene, sky-like flower,
Haste to adorn her bower:
From thy long cloudy bed,
Shoot forth thy damask head.

New startled blush of Flora!
The grief of pale Aurora,
Who will contest no more;
Haste, haste, to strew her floor.

Vermilion ball that 's given
From lip to lip in heaven ;
Love's couch's coverlid,
Haste, haste, to make her bed.

Dear offspring of pleased Venus,
And jolly, plump Silenus ;
Haste, haste to deck the hair,
Of th' only, sweetly fair.

See ! rosy is her bower,
Her floor is all this flower,
Her bed a rosy nest,
By a bed of Roses press'd."

Here we might insert a whole volume of nearly identical verses on the fleeting nature of beauty ; or to "A Rosebud in a Lady's bosom ;" or "On the Roses of a Lady's work ;" or "On picking up a Rose which Delia had dropt ;" but will not waste our space, or risk the reader's displeasure, by inserting the nauseous trash which once found admirers.

BURNS.

TO MISS CRUIKSHANKS, A VERY YOUNG LADY.

"Beauteous Rose-bud, young and gay,
Blooming in thy early May,

Never may'st thou, lovely flower,
Chilly shrink in sleety shower!
Never Boreas' hoary path,
Never Eurus' pois'nous breath,
Never baleful stellar lights,
Taint thee with untimely blights!
Never, never reptile thief
Riot on thy virgin leaf!
Nor even Sol too fiercely view
Thy bosom blushing still with dew!

May'st thou long, sweet crimson gem,
Richly deck thy native stem;
Till some ev'ning, sober, calm,
Dropping dews, and breathing balm,
While all around the woodland rings,
And ev'ry bird thy requiem sings;
Thou, amid the dirgeful sound,
Shed thy dying honours round,
And resign to parent earth
The loveliest form she e'er gave birth."

MRS. C. SMITH.

[VARIOUS ROSES.]

"Here, like the fatal fruit to Paris given
That spread fell feuds throughout the fabled heaven,

The yellow Rose her golden globe displays;
There lovelier still, among the spiny sprays
Her blushing rivals glow with brighter dyes,
Than paints the summer sun or western skies;
And the scarce tinged, and paler Rose unveil
Their modest beauties to the sighing gale."

"——There Roses blow
Almost uncultured: some with dark green leaves
Contrast their flowers of pure unsullied white;
Others, like velvet robes of royal state
Of richest crimson; while, in thorny moss
Enshrined and cradled, the most lovely wear
The lines of youthful beauty's glowing cheek."

BYRON.

[THE ROSE AND THE NIGHTINGALE.]

"For there—the Rose o'er crag or vale,
Sultana of the Nightingale,
The maid for whom his melody,
His thousand songs are heard on high,
Blooms blushing to her lover's tale:
His queen, the garden queen, his Rose,
Unbent by winds, unchill'd by snows,

....Far from the winters of the west,
By every breeze and season blest,
Returns the sweets by nature given
In softest incense back to heaven;
And grateful yields that smiling sky
Her fairest hue and fragrant sigh."

MRS. HEMANS.

"How much of memory dwells amidst thy bloom,
Rose! ever wearing beauty for thy dower!
The bridal-day—the festival—the tomb—
Thou hast thy part in each, thou stateliest flower!

Therefore with thy soft breath come floating by
A thousand images of love or grief,
Dreams, fill'd with tokens of mortality,
Deep thoughts of all things beautiful and brief.

Not such thy spells o'er those that hail'd thee first
In the clear light of Eden's golden day!
There thy rich leaves to crimson glory burst,
Link'd with no dim remembrance of decay.

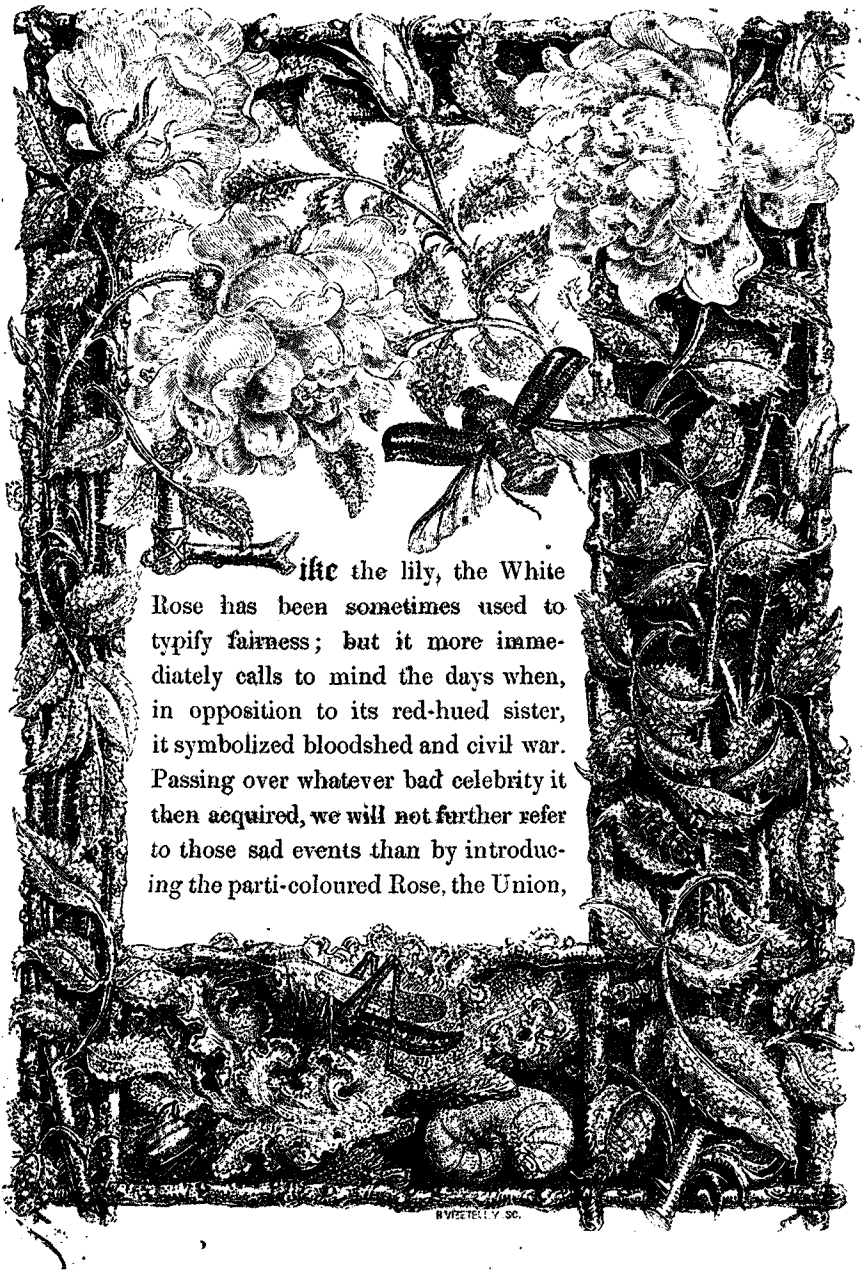
Rose! for the banquet gather'd, and the bier;
Rose! colour'd now by human hope and pain;
Surely where death is not, nor change, nor fear,
Yet may we meet thee, joy's own flower, again!"

The White Rose.

ROSA ALBA.

"Not but, perchance, to deck some virgin's tomb,——
Some Rose of maiden-blush may faintly bloom,
Or, withering, hang its emblematic head."

MASON.



Like the lily, the White Rose has been sometimes used to typify fairness; but it more immediately calls to mind the days when, in opposition to its red-hued sister, it symbolized bloodshed and civil war. Passing over whatever bad celebrity it then acquired, we will not further refer to those sad events than by introducing the parti-coloured Rose, the Union,

or red-and-white striped Rose, which was very early* selected as emblematic of the happy termination of the Wars of the Roses, by the blending

"Of the fatal colours of the striving houses;"

which did

"Unite the White Rose with the Red—
Smile Heaven on this fair conjunction,
That long hath frown'd upon their enmity!"

SHAKSPERE.

Or, as Drayton says,

"In one stalk did happily unite
The pure vermilion Rose and purer White."

Shakspere mentions the same Rose, apart from its political associations:—

"The Roses fearfully on thorns did stand,
One blushing shame, another white despair;
A third, nor red nor white, *had stolen of both.*"

And we may introduce here, as appropriate to this Rose, the lines of Carew, on

* As early as 1503, "the Rose of colour red and white," is mentioned by Dunbar, in the Allegory of the "Thistle and the Rose," as the emblem of this happy event.

RED AND WHITE ROSES.

"Read in these Roses the sad story
Of my hard fate, and your own glory:
In the White you may discover
The paleness of a fainting lover;
In the Red, the flames still feeding
On my heart, with fresh wounds bleeding:
The white will tell you how I languish,
And the red express my anguish;
The white my innocence displaying,
The red my martyrdom betraying.
The frowns that on your brow resided,
Have those Roses thus divided;
Oh! let your smiles but clear the weather,
And then they both shall grow together."

Herrick gives a new version of the classical fable, that the Rose was originally White:—

"Roses at first were white,
Till they could not agree
Whether my Sappho's breast,
Or they, more white should be.
But being vanquish'd quite,
A blush their cheeks bespread;
Since which, believe the rest,
The Roses first came red."

As a specimen of the use of the White Rose to symbolize fairness, the following compliment, by Cleveland, may be given:—

"—— Her cheeks
Where Roses mix: no civil war
Between her York and Lancaster."

Somerville also availed himself of the same subject to pay a compliment to a lady, on his presenting her with a White and a Red Rose:—

"If this pale Rose offend your sight,
It in your bosom wear;
'T will blush to find itself less white,
And turn Lancastrian there.

But, Celia, should the red be chose,
With gay vermilion bright;
'T would sicken at each blush that glows,
And in despair turn white."

The White Rose has been beautifully described by Byron; and, as we cannot often quote from his works, we are glad to have an opportunity of doing so here, where our selections are fewer than we could have wished:—

"A single Rose is shedding there
Its lovely lustre, meek and pale:

It looks as planted by despair—
So white—so faint—the slightest gale
Might whirl the leaves on high;
And yet, though storms and blight assail,
And hands more rude than wintry sky
May wring it from the stem—in vain—
To-morrow sees it bloom again!
* * * * *
Alone and dewy, coldly pure and pale;
As weeping Beauty's cheek at Sorrow's tale."

Modern poets have generally made the White Rose the vehicle of sad thoughts:—

"O, Sorrow!
Why dost borrow
The natural hue of health from vermeil lips?—
To give maiden blushes
To the White Rose bushes?
Or, is it thy dewy hand the Daisy tips?"

KEATS.

The following lines by Crabbe are more emblematic of suffering purity than of successful love, and are therefore more appropriate to the White than to the Red Rose.

[SONG OF THE DYING MAIDEN.]

"Let me not have this gloomy view
About my room, around my bed;

But morning Roses, wet with dew,
To cool my burning brows instead.
As flowers that once in Eden grew,
Let them their fragrant spirits shed;
And every day the sweets renew,
Till I, a fading flower, am dead.

Oh! let the herbs I loved to rear
Give to my sense their perfumed breath;
Let them be placed about my bier,
And grace the gloomy house of death."

MISS LANDON.

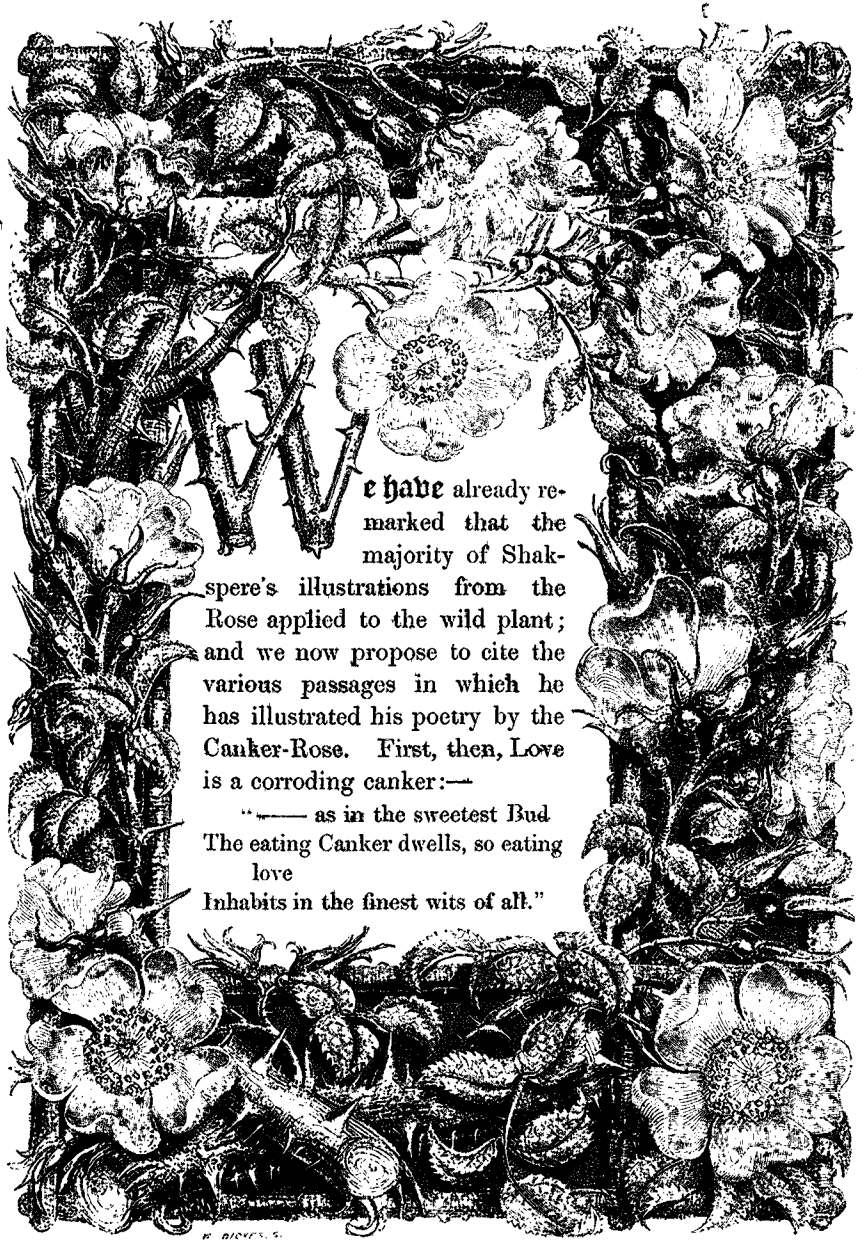
"A beautiful white Provence Rose!
Yet wan and pale, as that it knew
What changing skies and sun could do;
As that it knew, and knowing, sigh'd,
The vanity of summer pride;
As watching could put off the hour
When falls the leaf and fades the flower.
Alas! that every lovely thing
Lives only but for withering,—
That spring, rainbows, and summer shine,
End but in autumn's pale decline."

The Wild Rose.

ROSA CANINA.

"Sweet is the Rose, but grows upon a Breere."

SPENSER.



We have already remarked that the majority of Shakspere's illustrations from the Rose applied to the wild plant; and we now propose to cite the various passages in which he has illustrated his poetry by the Canker-Rose. First, then, Love is a corroding canker:—

"—— as in the sweetest Bud
The eating Canker dwells, so eating love
Inhabits in the finest wits of all."

To which it is replied that unadvised love only is such injurious canker:—

"—— as the most forward Bud,
Is eaten by the Canker ere it blow,
Even so by love the young and tender wit
Is turn'd to folly; blasting in the bud,
Losing his verdure, even in the prime,
And all the fair effects of future hopes."

But the most holy love, if hopeless and concealed, is also a wearing canker:—

"—— She never told her love,
But let concealment, like a worm i'the Bud,
Feed on her damask cheek: she pined in thought;
And with a green and yellow melancholy,
She sat like patience on a monument,
Smiling at grief."

And of Romeo we are told,

"He, his own affections' counsellor,
Is to himself—I will not say how true —
But to himself so secret and so close,
So far from sounding and discovery,
As is the Bud bit with an envious worm,
Ere he can spread his sweet leaves to the air,
Or dedicate his beauty to the Sun."

Sorrow has the same effect. The doting Constanee thus laments the fate of her beloved son:—

"But now will canker sorrow eat my Bud,
And chase the native beauty from his cheek,
And he will look as hollow as a ghost,
As dim and meagre as an ague's fit;
And so he'll die."

But Shakspere most frequently applies this beautiful metaphor to the blighting effect of sin upon the mind:—

"The Canker galls the infants of the spring,
Too oft before their buttons be disclosed;
And in the morn and liquid dew of youth
Contagious blastments are most imminent."

"Roses have thorns and silver fountains mud;
Clouds and eclipses stain both sun and moon,
And loathsome Canker lives in sweetest Buds."

"That thou art blamed shall not be thy defect,
For slander's mark was ever yet the fair;
The ornament of beauty is suspect,
A crow that flies in heaven's sweetest air.

So thou be good, slander doth but approve
Thy worth the greater, being woo'd of time;
For canker vice the sweetest Buds doth love,
And thou present'st a pure, unstained prime."

"How sweet and lovely dost thou make the shame,
Which, like a Canker in the fragrant Rose,
Doth stop the beauty of thy budding name!"

And so likewise, by way of contrast to the cultivated Rose,

"To put down Richard, that sweet lovely Rose,
And plant this thorn, this Canker Bolingbroke;"

and again,

"I had rather be a Canker in a hedge, than a Rose in his grace.

Lastly, it is a fairy's office

"To kill Cankers in the Musk-rose buds."

Notwithstanding the example set by the Prince of Bards, the "garden queen" has secured to herself nearly all the praises of the elder poets, and thrown her sister of the fields into the shade.

Modern poets have, however, done something to rescue the most lovely of the country's summer decorations from obscurity, and to place it in a more just position. Hamilton has a pretty ballad on the Wild Rose, entitled

THE FLOWER OF YARROW.

"Go, lovely Rose! what dost thou here,
Lingering away thy short-lived year?
Vainly shining, idly blooming,
Thy unenjoyed sweets consuming.

Vain is thy radiant garlies hue,
No hand to pull, no eye to view;
What are thy charms no heart desiring?
What profits beauty none admiring?

Go, Yarrow flower to Yarrow maid,
And on her panting bosom laid,
There all thy native form confessing
The charm of beauty is possessing."

Burns has several very beautiful songs to the Wild Rose; one of which we cannot resist the temptation of giving:—

"O bonnie was yon rosy Briar
That blooms sae far frae haunt o' man;

And bonnie she, and ah, how dear!
It shaded frae the e'enin sun.

Yon Rosebuds in the morning dew,
How pure among the leaves sae green;
But purer was the lover's vow
They witness'd in their shade yestreen.

All in its rude and prickly bower,
That crimson Rose, how sweet and fair!
But love is far a sweeter flower
Amid life's thorny path o' care.

The pathless wild, and wimpling burn,
Wi' Chloris in my arms, be mine;
And I, the world, nor wish, nor scorn,
In joys and griefs alike resign."

We are not surprised at Keats asking

"What is more tranquil than a Musk-rose blowing
In a green island, far from all men's knowing?"

when we hear his description of the flower:—

"—— mid-May's eldest child,
The coming Musk-rose, full of dewy wine,
The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves."

The grace which the scented banners of the arching Rose lend to the wild precipices of Scotland's noble hills, is recorded by Sir W. Scott:—

"The rocky summits, split and rent,
Form'd turret, dome, or battlement;
Or seem'd fantastically set
With cupola or minaret. ———
Nor were these earthborn castles bare,
Nor lack'd they many a banner fair;
For from their shiver'd brows display'd
Far o'er the unfathomable glade,
All twinkling with the dew-drops sheen,
The Briar-rose fell in streamers green"

Scott also makes the Wilding Rose the subject of a bridegroom's praise, as an emblem of his hopes:—

"The Rose is fairest when 'tis budding new,
And hope is brightest when it dawns from fears;
The Rose is sweetest wash'd with morning dew,
And love is loveliest when embalm'd in tears.
O, wilding Rose! whom fancy thus endears,
I bid your blossoms in my bonnet wave,
Emblem of hope and love through future years."

Keats has imagined a lowland scene in England, and Scott has described a highland scene in Scotland, both adorned by the Wild Rose; and it is but fair to the beauteous Principality, that we should search among her mountains for a spot similarly decorated, and likewise depicted by the hand of a native bard:—

"Ah! the pale Briar-Rose! touch'd so tenderly,
As a pure ocean-shell, with faintest red,
Melting away to pearliness! I know
How its long light festoons, o'er-arching, hung
From the grey rock, that rises altar-like,
With its high waving crown of mountain ash,
'Midst the lone grassy dale."

HEMANS.

Miss Landon has some pretty fancies on

"—— the Wild Rose
* * in all its luxury of bloom,
Sown by the wind, nursed by the sun and air."

And again, in a more moralizing mood,

"—— impervious grows the Briar,
Cover'd with thorns and Roses, mingled like
Pleasures and pains, but shedding richly forth
Its fragrance on the air."

The Eglantine.

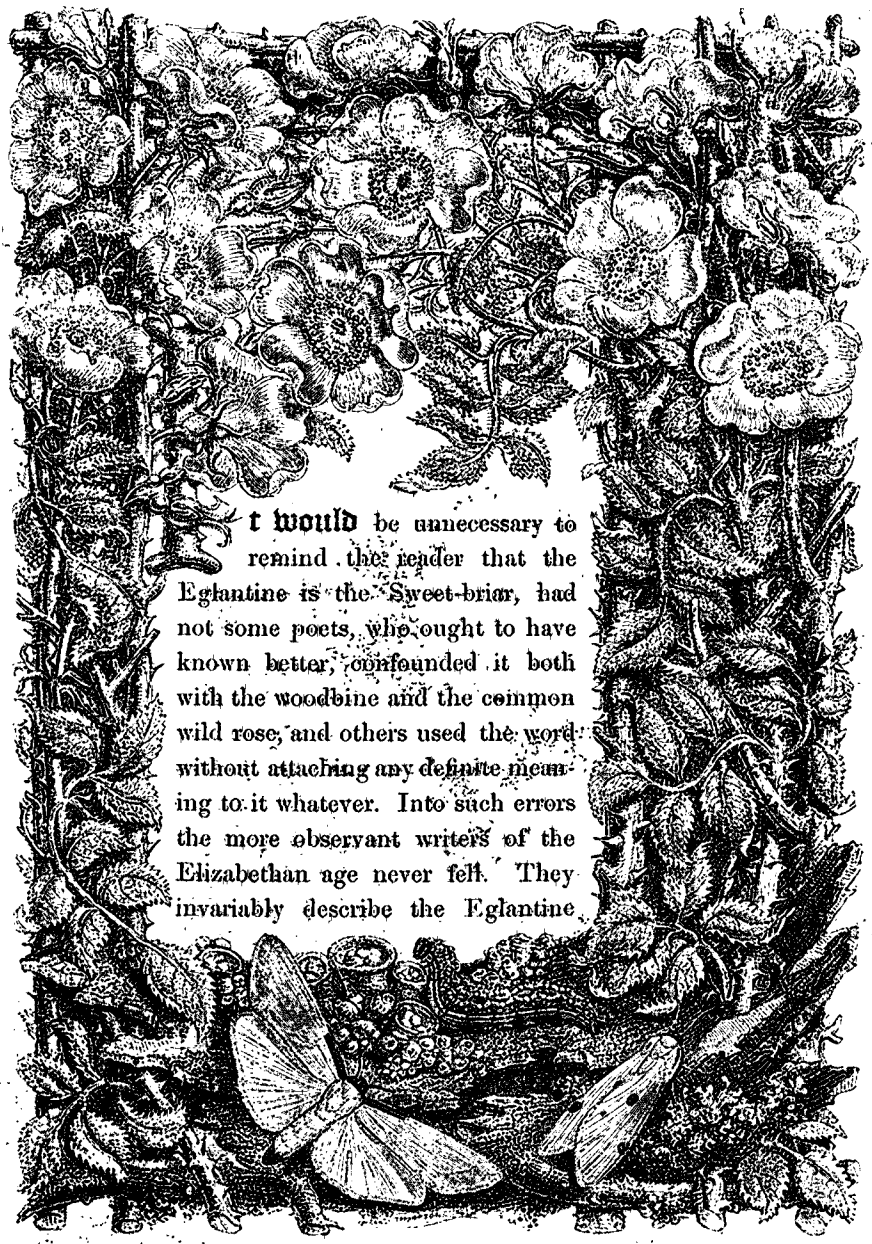
ROSA RUBIGINOSA.

"Sweet is the Eglantine, but pricketh near."

SPENSER.

"——grateful Eglantine regales the smell
Of those that walk at evening."

COWPER.



It would be unnecessary to remind the reader that the Eglantine is the Sweet-briar, had not some poets, who ought to have known better, confounded it both with the woodbine and the common wild rose, and others used the word without attaching any definite meaning to it whatever. Into such errors the more observant writers of the Elizabethan age never fell. They invariably describe the Eglantine

correctly, dwelling on the sweetness of its scented leaf—thus at once distinguishing it from its more common cousin of every hedgerow—and never giving it an inappropriate epithet or situation.

Chaucer seldom mentions a flower but with enthusiasm; nor is the Eglantine wanting in the accustomed praise:—

"—— suddenly I felt so sweet an air
Of the Eglanterè, that certainly
There is no heart (I deem) in such dispair,
Ne yet with thoughtis froward and contraire
So overlaid, but it should soon have bote
If it had once felt this savour swote."

The Eglantine here alluded to is described as forming part of an arbour, with

"Hedge as thick as is a castill wall;"

Spenser also uses it for the same purpose in his beautiful descriptions of the Bower of Bliss and the Bower of Adonis; and from its being likewise frequently appropriated by other writers of the time to the construction of arbours, it may reasonably be inferred that our ancestors usually so applied the Eglantine; thus displaying more wisdom and judgment than we who abandon it for scentless, but more showy exotic creepers.

Listen to the description of the arbour in the garden of Adonis:—

"And in the thickest covert of that shade
There was a pleasant arbour, not by art,
But of the trees' own inclination made,
Which knitting their rank branches part to part,
With wanton ivie-twine entrayl'd athwart,
And Eglantine and caprifole* among,
Fashion'd above within their inmost part,
That neither Phœbus' beams could through them throng,
Nor Æolus' sharp blast could work them any wrong."

Secondly, the Bower of Bliss:—

"—— Art, striving to compare
With Nature, did an arbour green dispread,
Framed of wanton ivie, flowring faire,
Through which the fragrant Eglantine did spread
His pricking arms, entrayl'd with roses red,
Which dainty odours round about them threw;
And all within with flowers was garnished,

* *Caprifolium*: the name of the Woodbine, until Linnæus classed it under the genus *Lonicera*.

That, when mild Zephyrus amongst them blew,
Did breathe out bounteous smells, and painted
colours shew."

If any authority were wanting to prove that the Eglantine is the Sweet-briar, Shakspere furnishes it; for, as the flower has no smell, he properly places the scent in the leaf, a property which does not pertain to any other of the Rose family. Of Imogen, Arviragus says,

"—— Thou shalt not lack—
The *leaf* of Eglantine, whom not to slander,
Out-sweeten'd not thy breath."

In the Midsummer Night's Dream we have another Bower,

"Quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine,
With sweet musk-roses, and with Eglantine."

Barnfield also introduces the arbour of Eglantine:

"And in the sweltering heat of summer-time
I would make cabinets for thee, my love;
Sweet-smelling arbours made of Eglantine
Should be thy shrine, and I would be thy dove;
Cool cabinets of fresh green laurel boughs
Should shadow us, o'er-set with thick-set eughes."

W. Browne likewise describes

"——an arbour shadow'd with a vine,
Mixed with rosemary and Eglantine."

Drayton, in his "Quest of *Cynthia*," selects the Eglantine, for the sweetness of its perfume, to compare with the effect of the breath of his mistress:—

"The meanest weed the soil there bear
Her breath did so refine,
That it with woodbine durst compare,
And erst with Eglantine."

G. Wither also identifies the Sweet-briar with "the sharp-sweet Eglantine:"—

"On every bush the Eglantine
With *leaves perfumed* hung."

Drummond, moreover, in one of his sonnets, applies the epithet "musket" to the Eglantine; and he elsewhere uses this word as synonymous with perfumed or scented, and not as implying the particular smell of musk:—

"Summer's sweet and musked breath."

In the description of the Bower of Bliss, to which R. Niccols leads the nightingale and

cuckoo when contending for precedence in song, in order that the nymphs may decide on their respective merits, he boldly plagiarizes Spenser's lines, and betrays his theft by ignorantly describing the Eglantine as "twining," not "spreading," its prickly arms, and as "bearing" the sweet flowers which Spenser merely "entrayled" with it:

"The inner porch seem'd entrance to entice,
It fashion'd was with such quaint rare device;
The top with canopy of green was spread,
Thicken'd with leaves of th' ivy's wanton head,
About the which the Eglantine did *twine*
His prickling arms, the branches to combine;
Bearing sweet flowers of more than fragrant odour,
Which stellified the roof with painted colour."

This doubly erroneous copy from Spenser is the first instance of that ignorance of this plant which we are about to mention; and we also learn from it how later poets came to describe the Eglantine as a trailing plant. In common with R. Niccols, they all seem to have inferred that if the Eglantine formed part of an arbour, it must have been capable of twining up the sides, and forming a roof "the branches to combine;" but no such inference is fairly deducible from any

of the descriptions: on the contrary, in every instance embowering trees or woodbine are associated with it to compose the canopy. The Eglantine was there on account of its sweetness; and that it assisted only in forming the walls, and not the roof, we learn from J. Shirley, who mentions in a bower

"—— a small window of Eglantine."

Herrick was one of the poets who, like his predecessors of the Elizabethan age, was aware that the scent of the Eglantine was in the leaf:—

"From this bleeding hand of mine
Take this *sprig* of Eglantine:
Which though sweet unto your smell,
Yet, the fretful briar will tell,
He who plucks the sweets shall prove
Many thorns to be in love."

Donne makes use of the name Sweet-briar, and describes it as a trailing plant needing support and dying when that is taken away; and thus, by his reputation as a poet among his cotemporaries, he perpetuated the error:—

"Oh! if a Sweet-briar climb up by a tree,

If to a paradise that transplanted be,
Yet that must wither which by it did rise."

During the whole of the Period from 1640 to 1725,—when Thomson searched the book of Nature for inspiration instead of the writings of his predecessors,—the Eglantine, or Sweet-briar, is never once correctly described; nor was any definite meaning attached to the word, which was introduced into poetry only to make up the "one line for rhyme" to match the "one line for sense."

Milton, it is well known, fell into the error of supposing the Eglantine to be a creeper, and distinguishing it from the Sweet-briar:—

"And at my window bid good-morrow,
Through the Sweet-briar, or the vine,
Or the twisted Eglantine."

Perhaps Milton's error may be thus explained: one of the prizes of the celebrated Floral Games of Toulouse was an "Eglantine," but this Eglantine was not the flower of a species of rose, but of the Spanish jessamine; and as Milton was an enthusiast in all that related to romance and ancient minstrelsy, he doubtless learnt from this source to call the jessamine by the name of

Eglantine, the real meaning of which word had been lost before his time.

But we cannot plead the same excuse for the unlearned Allan Ramsay; who, without having any notion what the Eglantine might be, twice introduces it into gardens as a choice and beautiful flower!

Speaking of the beauty of the plaid of the clan Fergus, he compares it to

"A garden plot, enrich'd with *chosen* flowers,
Where lovely pinks in sweet confusion rise,
And amaranths and *Eglantines surprise;*
Hedged round with fragrant Briar and Jessamine,
The rosy thorn and variegated green."

If any one can suggest what this *surprising* flower may be, we shall be surprised indeed!

So also in "The Gentle Shepherd" the Eglantine is mentioned with hyacinths as *par excellence* the representatives of the cultivated flowers of the garden.

This ignorance descended to the time of Shenstone, who for the Eglantine has no better epithet than one copied from Shakspere, "sweet-leaft Eglantine;" and of the Sweet-briar says,

"Not a beech 's more *beautiful green*,
But a Sweet-briar *twines* it around;"

though Thomson had many years previously correctly described the Sweet-briar as occupying its frequent natural position, and yielding its delicious perfume under the influence of the evening dew:—

"Oft let me wander o'er the dewy fields,
Where freshness breathes, and dash the trembling drops
From the bent bush, as through the verdant maze
Of Sweet-briar hedges I pursue my walk."

Blair likewise, about the same time, recorded a similar scene, beautified by the same plant:—

"—— Oh! when my friend and I
In some thick wood have wander'd heedless on,
Hid from the vulgar eye, and sat us down
Upon the sloping cowslip-cover'd bank,
Where the pure limpid stream has slid along
In grateful errors through the underwood,
Sweet murmuring: methought the shrill-tongued thrush
Mended his song of love; the sooty blackbird
Mellow'd his pipe, and soften'd every note;

The Eglantine smell'd sweeter, and the rose
Assumed a dye more deep; whilst every flower
Vied with its fellow plant in luxury
Of dress."

Langhorne appears to have justly admired "the pensive Eglantine," and gives it indeed priority over the cultured rose:—

"Yet, lovely flower, I find in thee
Wild sweetness which no words express;
And charms in thy simplicity,
That dwell not in the pride of dress."

In some elegant lines, "written at the commencement of Spring," Mrs. Tighe exhibits that intimate acquaintance with the minutiæ of external nature which has ever been characteristic of the true poet:—

"Put forth thy fresh and tender leaves,
Soft Eglantine of fragrance early,
Thee, Memory, first revived, perceives,
From childhood's dawn still welcomed dearly."

If the mystical spirit of Shelley may be bound down by the signification of his own words (a test which his high imaginings will not always

stand,) we should say that he seems to have been mistaken in the character of the Eglantine, when he speaks of

" —— the honey-wine
Of the moon-unfolded Eglantine."

Probably he meant the woodbine, to which his words would be beautifully applicable, and this opinion is confirmed by his elsewhere giving the Eglantine the epithet of the woodbine, "lush;" a word which the finger-counting critics for many years substituted for "luscious" in Shakspere's description of Titania's bower:—

"And in the warm hedge grew lush Eglantine."

But Keats is more correct when, in allusion to the powerful perfume which the "pastoral Eglantine" emits when wet with dew or rain, he appropriately calls it

" —— dew-sweet Eglantine;"

and says also,

" —— rain-scented Eglantine
Gave temperate sweets to that well-wooing sun."

Sir W. Scott, on more than one occasion, in-

troduces the Eglantine into his lustrous pictures of Scottish scenery:—

"Boon Nature scatter'd, free and wild,
Each plant or flower, the mountain's child;
Here Eglantine embalm'd the air,
Hawthorn and hazel mingled there."

And again, in his description of Loch Katrine *by moonlight*:—

"The wild rose, Eglantine, and broom,
Wasted around their rich perfume;
The birch-trees wept in fragrant balm,
The aspens slept beneath the calm;
The silver light, with quivering glance,
Play'd on the water's still expanse."

Such wild scenes, "Nature's home," who would wish to reclaim? There let the unsparing hand of civilization be stayed, and obey the injunction of the poet, who has sanctified them and imposed his interdict against their desecration:—

"—— On the wild hill
Let the wild heathbell flourish still;
Cherish the tulip, prune the vine,
But freely let the woodbine twine,
And leave untrimm'd the Eglantine."

Several modern poets have erroneously identified the Eglantine with the common wild rose. This is a mistake into which many passages in Wordsworth's poems show that he has fallen. Mrs. Hemans likewise, who certainly means the wild rose when she speaks of

"—— arches of wild Eglantine
Drooping from the tall elm,"

and

"Arches of sweet Eglantine are cast
From every hedge,"

does not seem to have been aware of the identity of the Eglantine and the Sweet-briar; for in the only two instances in which she uses the latter word she describes it erroneously: in one she desires to see

"The Sweet-briar *twine* around my window;"

and in another, speaks of

"The scent by the *blossoming* Sweet-briar shed:"

whereas the Sweet-briar blossom has no scent whatever.

The Woodbine.

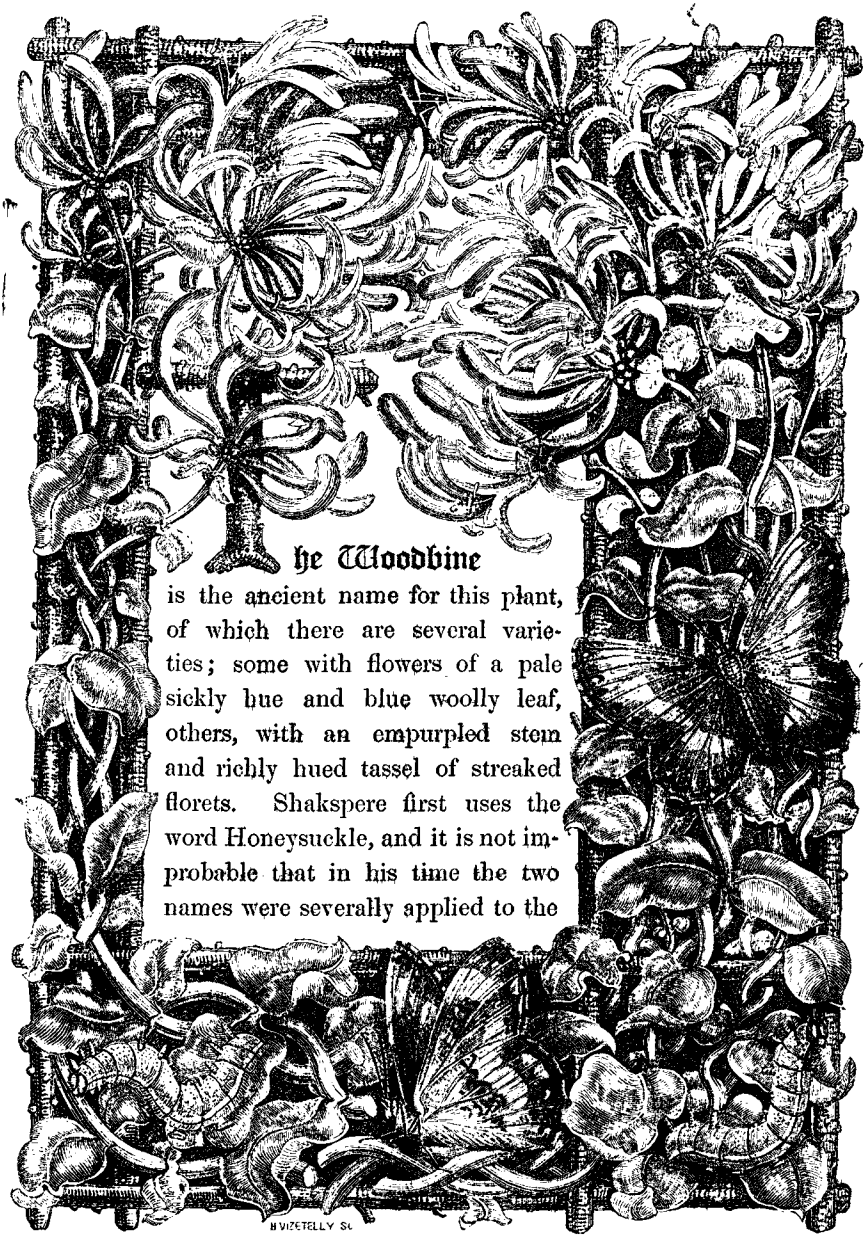
LONICERA PERICLYMENUM.

"The Woodbine, who her Elm in marriage meets,
And brings her dowry in surrounding sweets."

CHURCHILL.

"——— the Woodbine fair,
With tassels that perfume the summer air."

MRS. C. SMITH.



The Woodbine

is the ancient name for this plant, of which there are several varieties; some with flowers of a pale sickly hue and blue woolly leaf, others, with an empurpled stem and richly hued tassel of streaked florets. Shakspere first uses the word Honeysuckle, and it is not improbable that in his time the two names were severally applied to the

H VIZETELLY Sc

different varieties; the Woodbine signifying the pale-hued plant which grows in woods and shady places, and the Honeysuckle the more vigorous and sweeter scented flower which flaunts gaudily in the open hedgerow. This conjecture may perhaps be admitted to explain a much disputed passage in the great dramatist's works which we shall hereafter have occasion to quote.

In Chaucer's beautiful Allegory of "The Flower and the Leaf," "the Gentlewoman" who describes the dream which befell her in the arbour of Eglantine, tells us that she saw "a world of ladies,"

"And every lady had a chapèlet
On their heads of branches fresh and green,
Some of laurel, and some full pleasantly
Had chapèlets of Wodebind, and sadly
Some of Agnus castus weren also."

The import of these chaplets is confided to her by one of the ladies of the train. Those who wore chaplets of Agnus castus were such as had never married;

"And tho' that wore chapèlets on their head
Of fresh Wodebind be such as never were
To Love untrue in word, in thought, ne deed,

"But ay steadfast, ne for plesaunce ne fear,
Tho' that they should their heartis all to-tere,
Would never flit, but ever were stedfast
Till that their livis there assunder brast."

The Woodbine introduces us to a beautiful simile in another of Chaucer's works, "Troilus and Cresseide." The lovers have quarrelled, but of course, after a while, are more ardently attached than ever:—

"And as about a tree with many a twist
Bitrent and writhen is the sweet Wodebinde
'Gan each of them in armis other winde."

Chaucer's translation of the tale of Troilus and Cressida was apparently a favourite study of Shakspere's, and besides furnishing him with the subject of one of the finest of his dramas, has supplied him with the germ of many beautiful passages in other plays. Such are the following words of Titania to the hideous Bottom, whom the jealous Oberon has spell-bound her to love:—

"Sleep thou, and I will wind thee in my arms.
So doth the Woodbine, the sweet Honeysuckle,
Gently entwist, the female ivy so
Enrings the barky fingers of the elm."

The commentators have as usual endeavoured with much assiduity to darken this passage. But if it wants elucidation, the original from Chaucer supplies it. The word-mongers in their anxiety to find out round what the Honeysuckle "entwists," suppose the Woodbine and Honeysuckle to be different plants, which may intertwine *each other;* whereas the whole force of the simile depends upon there being but one twining plant to encircle a passive one; since Bottom lies senseless to the charms and toyings of the Fairy Queen. The other simile of the ivy and the elm conveys this idea precisely, and it is probable that the "Woodbine" and "sweet Honeysuckle" are only a reduplication of names for the same thing; and either that which it entwists may be understood (Chaucer explains it, *the tree),* or, together with the ivy, it encircles the elm. The latter explanation is rendered more probable by the felicitous distinction between the modes in which the two plants are described to cling to the elm; the Woodbine "gently entwists" the ivy "enrings." Let any one try to disengage either of these creepers from a tree and he will at once admit the propriety of the terms.

Other commentators have, without any autho-

rity, added "the maple" after "gently entwist.' Gifford, rejecting this unauthorized interpolation, but equally desirous to find something round which "the sweet Honeysuckle" may twine, has even suggested that Shakspere intended by "the Woodbine" the blue Bindweed, or Convolvulus; and in support of his opinion refers to the following lines by Ben Jonson:—

"——— behold!
How the blue *Bindweed** doth itself infold
With *Honeysuckle*, and both these intwine
Themselves with bryony and jessamine,
To cast a kind and odoriferous shade."

But we need not ask how this explanation accords with the epithet "luscious" applied by Shakspere to the Woodbine in a previous scene of the Midsummer Night's Dream, when he describes the Bower of Titania,

"Quite over-canopied with *luscious* Woodbine?"

* The *Convolvulus purpureus* or *major* was well known in B. Jonson's time by the name of Blue Bindweed. Parkinson *(Parad. p. 358, ed. 1629)* calls it "*Convolvulus cæruleus major rotundifolius*; which in English wee call eyther Great blue Bell-flowers, or more usually *Great Blue Bindweedes.*"

On another occasion Shakspere draws from the Honeysuckle an useful reflection on the proverbial insolence of exalted favourites:—

"—— the pleached bower
Where Honeysuckles, ripen'd by the sun,
Forbid the sun to enter; like favourites,
Made proud by princes, that advance their pride
Against that power that bred it."

From the "Roman de la Rose" and its beautiful illuminations we learn what was the most becoming costume for a gentleman of the time, and that, amongst other things, a hat of flowers was considered indispensable to a wooer. The author's advice to a lover on his dress is,

"Have hat of flowres freshè as May;
Chaplet of roses of Whitsundày."

Hence the garlands so commonly described in the old poets, were not mere fanciful conceits, but an every-day habit, borrowed perhaps from the Romans, who at their feasts sat crowned with flowers. As late as the seventeenth century, Herrick says of the rural maidens that he had

"—— seen them in a round,*
Each virgin, like a Spring,
With Honeysuckles crown'd."

As Milton has used both the popular names of the Honeysuckle with propriety, it cannot be doubted that although he might be in error in applying the epithet "twisted" to the Eglantine, he could not, as has been asserted, have meant the Woodbine. In Lycidas he appropriately describes it as

"—— the well-attired Woodbine;"

and introduces it into Paradise with equal accuracy, when Eve, self-confident, proposes that while she

"In yonder spring of roses intermix'd
With myrtle, finds what to redress till noon,"

Adam shall

"—— wind
The Woodbine round this arbour, or direct
The clasping ivy where to twine."

The Honeysuckle he mentions in a beautiful rustic picture:—

* A dance so called.

"I sat me down to watch upon a bank
With ivy canopied, and interwove
With flaunting Honeysuckle."

Every one knows by experience the appropriateness of the name Honeysuckle to the

"Honey-dropping Woodbine;"

SHIRLEY.

and it is to this peculiar sweetness of its nectar that Lovelace alludes in his lines in praise of his mistress; written at a time when it was the fashion for cold-blooded lovers to extol their mistresses in heartless rhymes, and compensate for their want of feeling by absurdly fulsome flatteries. The lady is in her garden, when,

"The flowers in their best way
As to their Queen their homage pay;
But the proud Honeysuckle, spread
Like a pavilion o'er her head,
Contemns the wanting commonalty,
That but to two ends useful be,
And to her lips thus aptly placed,
With *smell* and *hue* presents her *taste*."

But what could be expected in an age when a favourite pastoral poet, the rival of Pope in

that species of composition, speaks of *low-growing*

"Honeysuckles of a purple dye;"

and contrasts them with

"The twining Woodbine, how it climbs, to breathe
Refreshing sweets around on all beneath?"

A. PHILLIPS.

But leaving these fulsome lovers and learned shepherds, let us take a "Country Walk" with Dyer, who with better knowledge and a purer taste exclaims:—

"What a fair face does Nature show!
A landscape wide salutes my sight,
Of shady vales, and mountains bright;
And azure heavens I behold,
And clouds of silver and of gold.
And now into the fields I go,
Where thousand flaming flowers glow;
And every neighbouring hedge I greet,
With Honeysuckles smelling sweet."

The truth of the last line Armstrong confirms:—

"O'er every hedge the wanton Woodbine roves."

Shenstone, who loved his "Leasowes," and devoted his life to their improvement and the

revival of a taste for a more natural style of gardening, justly selected the wild beauty of the Woodbine to ornament the naked trunks of tall growing trees:—

"Not a pine in my grove is there seen,
But with tendrils of Woodbine is bound;"

and, therefore, he confidently invokes the "gentle air" to

"Convey the Woodbine's rich perfume,"

as he lay upon

"a bank with pansies gay."

If it appears that but few extracts relating to the Woodbine have been culled from the older poets, it is because the Woodbine being generally associated by them with the Eglantine to form arbours and bowers, such passages will be found under the description of that flower, and need not, therefore, be repeated.

This bower-building character has ever attached to the Woodbine; and every garden can boast its arbour,

"Where Woodbines twist their fragrant shade,
And noontide beams repel,"

J. CUNNINGHAM.

affording a pure source of gratification, when

"——the fond zephyr through the Woodbine plays,
And makes sweet fragrance in the mantling bower."

IBID.

The Woodbine is so general a favourite for *this purpose, that* over almost every rustic seat either

"To deck the wall, or weave the bower,
The Woodbines mix in am'rous play,
And breathe their fragrant lives away."

N. COTTON.

Indeed, so generally is

"——the tangled Woodbine's balmy bloom"

T. WARTON.

used for this purpose, that Shenstone even supposes it to derive pleasure from the use that is made of it:—

"The Woodbine lends her spicy charms,
That loves to weave the lover's bower;"

thus deserving well the praise of Burns:—

"Ye Woodbines hanging bonnilie,
In scented bowers."

Burns has a favourite simile from the dew-drop in the Woodbine:—

"Yon knot of gay flowers in the arbour,
They ne'er wi' my Phillis can vie;
Her breath is the breath o' the Woodbine,
Its dewdrop o' diamond her eye."

And again:—

"The Woodbine I will pu' when the e'ening star is near,
And the diamond drops o' dew shall be her e'en sae clear."

Further on we have an aphorism, the truth of which we trust no fair maiden, "who has had experiences," is prepared to deny, though she does despite to so fair a flower:—

"The Woodbine in the dewy weet,
When evening shades in silence meet,
Is nocht sae fragrant or sae sweet
As is a kiss o' Willy."

Cowper has been more successful in his description of the flower, as it blooms amid the shade of embowering trees, than in the use which he makes of it as an illustration:—

"Copious of flowers the Woodbine, pale and wan,
But well compensating her sickly looks
With never cloying odours, early and late."

The lesson he would derive from the plant is far from true. Love was not sent to cramp and enervate the heart; but on the contrary to expand, strengthen, hallow, and enlarge it:—

"As Woodbine weds the plant within her reach,
Rough elm, or smooth-grained ash, or glossy beech,
In spiral rings ascends the trunk, and lays
Her golden tassels on the leafy sprays,
But does a mischief while she lends a grace,
Straitening its growth by such a strict embrace;
So Love, that clings around the noblest minds,
Forbids the advancement of the soul he binds."

To such high flights of moralizing the simple Bloomfield does not aspire; content to give a plain description of the Woodbine and its haunts, without employing it "to point a moral":—

"High fences, proud to charm the gazing eye,
Where many a nestling first essays to fly;
Where blows the Woodbine, faintly streak'd with red,

And rests on every bow its tender head;
Round the young ash its twining branches meet,
Or crown the hawthorn with its odours sweet."

Keats, who has almost a Shaksperean happiness in his allusions to flowers, says,

"Honeysuckles full of clear bee-wine;"

and,

"—— clumps of Woodbine, taking the soft wind
Upon their summer-thrones."

Sir Walter Scott gives it its due place in Scottish scenery:—

"—— Honeysuckle loved to crawl
Up the low crag and ruin'd wall."

Coleridge is more metaphysical, when he describes

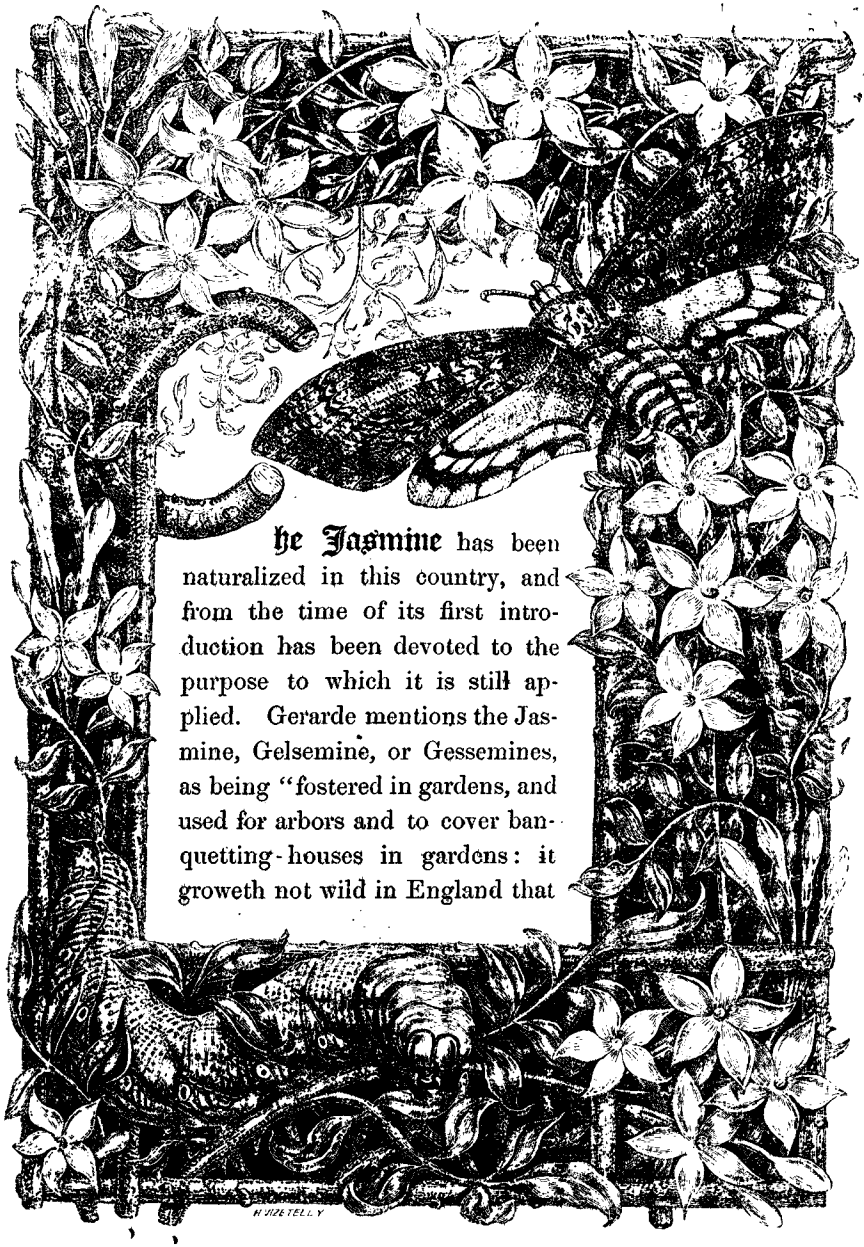
"—— the Woodbine bower,
Whose rich flowers, swinging in the morning breeze,
Over their dim fast-moving shadows hung,
Making a quiet image of disquiet
In the smooth, scarcely moving river-pool."

The Jasmine.

JASMINUM OFFICINALE.

"Like a bridal canopy overhead,
The Jasmines their slender wreathings spread,
One with stars as ivory white,
The other with clusters of amber light."

L. E. L.



The Jasmine has been naturalized in this country, and from the time of its first introduction has been devoted to the purpose to which it is still applied. Gerarde mentions the Jasmine, Gelsemine, or Gessemines, as being "fostered in gardens, and used for arbors and to cover banquetting-houses in gardens: it groweth not wild in England that

I can understand of." The Jasmine is said by some authors to be a native of Switzerland; but, though it now grows wild among the hills of that romantic country, others conceive it to be an exotic there, and allege that its only true native country is Eastern Asia.

Spenser is the earliest English poet who mentions this plant:—

"—— young blossom'd Jessemines;
Such fragrant flowers do give most odorous smell."

And D'Avenant seems justly to have admired

"—— the earliest shade
And sweetest that the Spring can spread
Of Jasmine, briar, and woodbine made."

Milton speaks of the

"—— pale Jessamine,"

on more than one occasion; and weaves it among the myrtle bowers of Paradise:—

"—— each beauteous flower,
Iris all hues, roses, and Jessamine,
Rear'd high their flourish'd heads between, and wrought
Mosaic."

Prior contrasts

"The Jasmine's breath divine,"

SHENSTONE.

with that of plants which yield their perfume only to the night-breeze:—

"The twining Jasmine and the blushing rose
With lavish grace their morning scent disclose;
The smelling tuberose and jonquil declare
The stronger impulse of an evening air."

Churchill gives the first copious description of the Jessamine:—

"The Jessamine, with which the Queen of Flowers,
To charm her God* adorns his *favourite* bowers;
Which brides, by the plain hand of neatness drest,—
Unenvied rival!—wear upon their breast;
Sweet as the incense of the morn, and chaste
As the pure zone which circles Dian's waist."

N. Cotton notices the decorative purposes to which this elegant trailer is usually applied:—

"Here Jasmines spread the silver flower,
To deck the wall, or weave the bower."

* Zephyrus.

But he is very inferior to Cowper, who adds to his other flowering shrubs,

" —— luxuriant above all,
The Jasmine, throwing wide her elegant sweets;
The deep dark green of whose unvarnish'd leaf
Makes more conspicuous, and illumines more
The bright profusion of her scatter'd stars."

We have seen the aristocratic use to which Gerarde appropriates the Jasmine; but now the plant is more diffused, and not only the lordly banqueting-house can boast its sweets, but many a lowly cottage walls are hung with its odoriferous tapestry, and many an humble peasant can say with Coleridge,

" —— Most soothing sweet it is
To sit beside our cot, our cot o'ergrown
With white-flowered Jasmine and the broad-leaved myrtle,
(Meet emblems they of Innocence and Love!)"

Still more grateful is it when its feathery streamers penetrate within the casement; and who is there, that in sickness or pain has experienced the soothing influence of

"—— the Jessamine's lovely gloom,
With its long twigs that blossom'd in the room,"
CRABBE.

but has felt tempted to exclaim, if not in the words, at least in the thoughts, of Mrs. Hemans,

"Welcome, O pure and lovely forms, again
Unto the shadowy stillness of my room!
* * * * ye bring a joyous train
Of summer-thoughts attendant on your bloom,
Visions of freshness, of rich bowery gloom,
Of the low murmurs filling mossy dells,
Of stars that look down on your folded bells
Through dewy leaves, of many a wild perfume,
Greeting the wanderer of the hill and grove
Like sudden music?"

There is some doubt as to the native locality of the Jasmine, but throughout the East it grows luxuriantly; although there it is said to emit no fragrance during the heat of the day, disclosing it only to the moist dews of the evening. Of this fact Moore has beautifully availed himself in his description of an Indian night-scene:—

"'T was midnight—through the lattice, wreathed
With woodbine, many a perfume breathed

From plants that wake when others sleep;
From timid Jasmine buds, that keep
Their odour to themselves all day,
But when the sunlight dies away,
Let the delicious secret out
To every breeze that roams about."

And again, more fancifully:—

"The image of love that nightly flies
To visit the bashful maid,
Steals from the Jasmine flower, that sighs
Its soul, like her, in the shade."

Miss Landon, who has also carried her imagination to warmer climes, has frequently embodied the Jasmine in her descriptions of southern scenery. We need hardly say that, besides the white Jasmine naturalized in our country, there are several other species, some of which are of a brilliant yellow:—

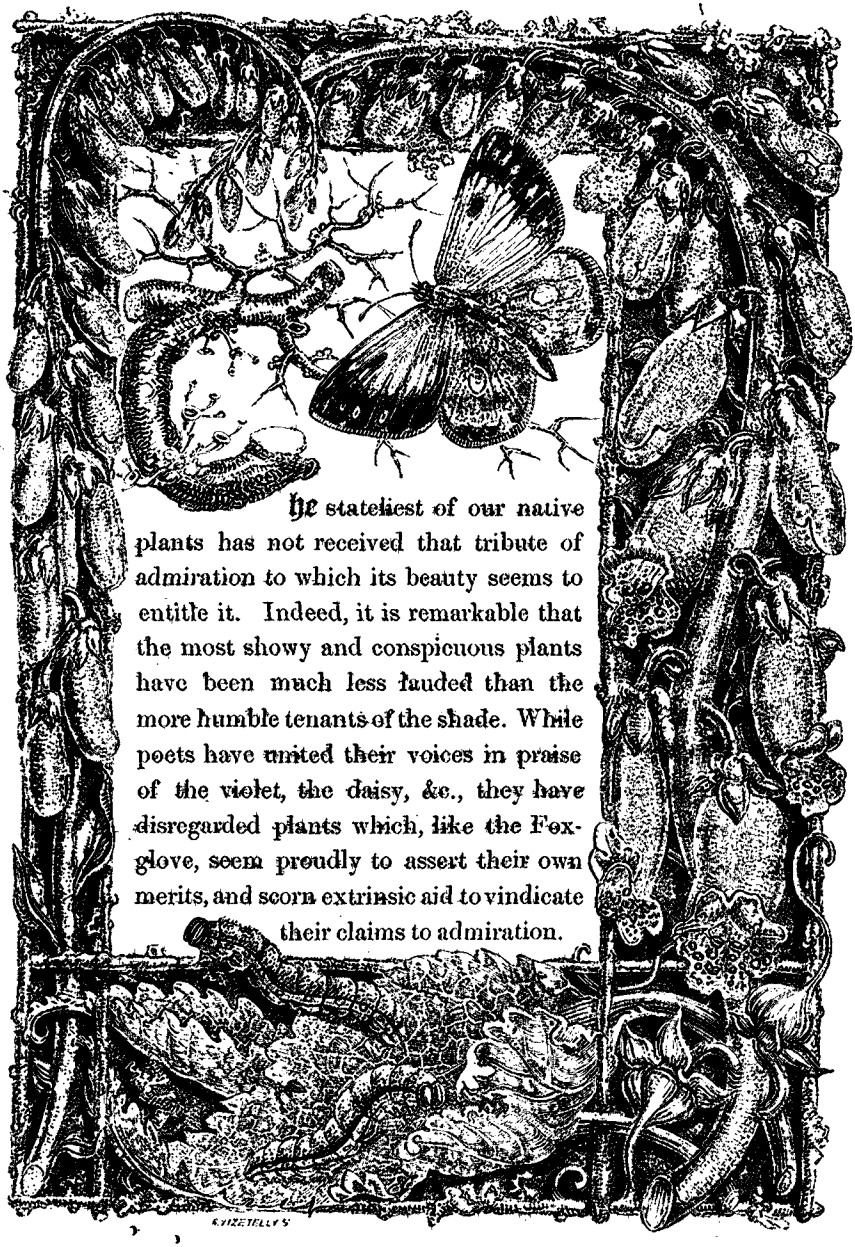
"Jasmines,—some like silver spray,
Some like gold in the morning ray;—
Fragrant stars, and favourites they,
When Indian girls on a festival-day
Braid their dark tresses."

The Foxglove.

DIGITALIS PURPUREA.

"To later Autumn's fragrant breath
Clematis' feathery garlands dance;
The hollow Foxglove nods beneath."

MRS C. SMITH.



The stateliest of our native plants has not received that tribute of admiration to which its beauty seems to entitle it. Indeed, it is remarkable that the most showy and conspicuous plants have been much less lauded than the more humble tenants of the shade. While poets have united their voices in praise of the violet, the daisy, &c., they have disregarded plants which, like the Foxglove, seem proudly to assert their own merits, and scorn extrinsic aid to vindicate their claims to admiration.

Showy flowers may be said to be like showy birds, their beauty is in their exterior, they have no *voice* by which they may be heard and remembered when they have ceased to please the eye.

Of this plant Parkinson says, "Wee call them generally in English, Foxeglove; but some (as thinking it to bee too foolish a name) doe call them Finger-flowers, because they are like unto the fingers of a glove, the ends cut off." This accords with the use to which W. Browne, a contemporary of the herbalist, applies this flower:—

"To keep her slender fingers from the sun,
Pan through the pastures oftentimes hath run
To pluck the speckled Foxgloves from their stem,
And on those fingers neatly placed them."

An idea which Cowley adopted, but so literally as to be almost ridiculous:—

"The Foxglove on fair Flora's hand is worn,
Lest while she gathers flowers she meet a thorn."

The following brief notices are simply de-

scriptive. First, from a moonlight scene by the Countess of Winchelsea:—

"Whilst now a paler hue the Foxglove takes,
Yet chequers still with red the dusky brakes."

The next "a wild romantic dell," where

"—— from the rock above each ivied seat
The spotted Foxgloves hung the purple head,
And lowly vi'lets kiss'd the wanderer's feet:
Sure never Hybla's bees roved through so wild a sweet!"

MICKLE.

But let it not be forgotten, that even while we

"Explore the Foxglove's freckled bell,"

MRS. C. SMITH.

and admire the

"Stately Foxgloves fair to see,"

BURNS.

we may learn from the "spiral Foxglove,"

"'Mongst boughs pavilion'd, where the deer's swift leap
Startles the wild bee from the Foxglove bells,"

KEATS.

to avoid the error of which it is the emblem:—

"Foxglove and nightshade, side by side,
Emblems of punishment and pride."

W. SCOTT.

S. T. Coleridge regrets in the fall of the year to see

"—— the Foxglove tall
Shed its loose purple bells, or in the gust,
Or when it bends beneath the up-springing lark,
Or mountain-finch alighting."

But Mrs. Hemans introduces the stately flower as one of the fertile sources of mental enjoyment which lie around our daily walks—too often unheeded because ever present:—

"There 's beauty all around our paths, if but our watchful eyes
Can trace it 'midst familiar things, and through their lowly guise;
We may find it where a hedge-row showers its blossoms o'er our way,
Or a cottage window sparkles forth in the last red light of day;
We may find it where a spring shines clear beneath an aged tree,
With the Foxglove o'er the water's glass, borne downwards by the bee."

The Marigold.

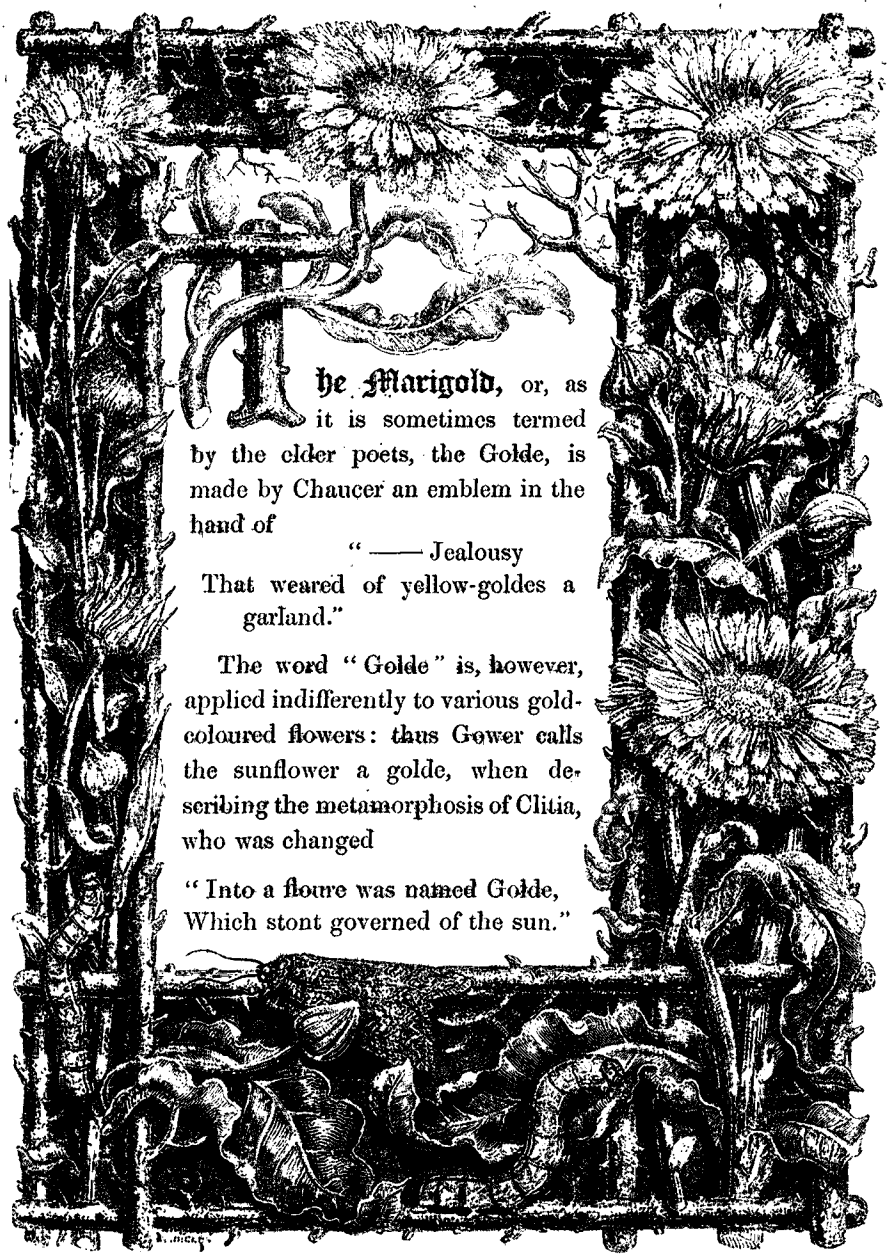
CALENDULA ARVENSIS.

" —— all of gold,
The Marigold did her leaves unfold."

DRUMMOND.

" The Marygold that shutteth with the light."

CHATTERTON.



The Marigold, or, as it is sometimes termed by the elder poets, the Golde, is made by Chaucer an emblem in the hand of

"—— Jealousy
That weared of yellow-goldes a garland."

The word "Golde" is, however, applied indifferently to various gold-coloured flowers: thus Gower calls the sunflower a golde, when describing the metamorphosis of Clitia, who was changed

"Into a floure was named Golde,
Which stont governed of the sun."

Indeed, the florists' works, of a still later date, were not more precise; for the name Golde is given indiscriminately to the Marigold, the sunflower, and the amaranth.

The closing of the Marigold at night and its unfolding at sunrise were very early noticed by the poets; thus Gawin Douglass, having risen early on a May morning, tells us he beheld

"The daisy and the Marigold unlappit,
Which all the night lay with their leavis lappit,
Them to reserve fra' rewmès pungitive."

On the other hand the closing of the Marigolds on the approach of evening, is described by Sir D. Lyndesay:—

"The Mariguldis, that all day were rejoisit
Of Phœbus' heat, now craftily are closit."

Spenser mentions the "faire Marigold;" and Drayton, who terms it one of "Phœbus' paramours," more than once places in a coronal

"The Marygold above t' adorn the arched bar,"

or to make his

"Garland somewhat swelling."

Many of the poetical allusions to this flower turn not only on its closing at night, but also on its opening in the morning with the dew thickly pearled on its petals, a characteristic which it has in common with some other flowers; although perhaps it retains the pearly drops longer after sunrise than most. It is this property which led Shakspere beautifully to describe it as

"The Marigold that goes to bed with the sun,
And with him rises weeping."

Of the sleeping Lucretia he says,

"Her eyes, like Marigolds, had sheath'd their light,
And, canopied in darkness, sweetly lay,
Till they might open to adorn the day."

SONG.

"Hark! hark! the lark at Heaven's gate sings,
And Phœbus 'gins arise,
His steeds to water at those springs
On chaliced flowers that lies;
And winking Mary-buds begin to ope their golden eyes;
With every thing that pretty is—My lady sweet, arise,
Arise, arise!"

The Marigold furnishes Shakspere with a moral from which he derives consolation to himself by comparing the precarious state of more exalted men with his own humbler but safer lot:

"Great princes' favourites their fair leaves spread
But as the Marigold at the sun's eye;
And in themselves their pride lies buried;
For at a frown they in their glory die.
The painful warrior famoused for fight,
After a thousand victories once foil'd,
Is from the book of honour rased quite,
And all the rest forgot for which he toil'd:
Then happy I, that love and am beloved
Where I may not remove, nor be removed."

Phineas Fletcher thus describes the sunrise:—

"The early morn let out the peeping day,
And strew'd his path with golden Marigolds."

And Browne the day's close:—

"But see the day is waxen old,
And 'gins to shut in with the Marigold."

Browne, in allusion to the electric light which the Marigold in common with many similarly coloured flowers is said to emit at night, compares it to his friend:—

"The orange-tawny Marigold; the night
Hides not her colours from a searching sight;
To thee then, dearest friend (my song's chief mate),
This colour chiefly I appropriate,
That spite of all the mists oblivion can,
Or envious frettings of a guilty man,
Retain'st thy worth."

Constable, to pay a compliment to his mistress, says, that when she entered her garden,

"The Marigold her leaves abroad did spread,
Because the sun's and her power is the same."

Drummond, lamenting the loss of his mistress alludes to the closing of the Marigold in the absence of the sun:—

"Absence hath robb'd me of my wealth and pleasure,
And I remain, like Marigold of sun
Deprived, that dies by shadow of some mountain."

And Cleveland makes the flower open and shut to the influence of his Lady's charms:—

"The Marigold, whose courtier face
Echoes the sun, and doth embrace

Her at his rise, at his full stop
Packs and shuts up her gaudy shop."

And then, in imitation of Constable, goes on to say that when his Phillis walks before sunrise, the Marigold

"Mistakes her cue, and doth display;
Thus Phillis ante-dates the day."

Habington has the same favourite conceit:—

"But oh! behold
How the wither'd Marigold
Closeth up, now she is gone,
Judging her the setting sun."

T. CAREW.

BOLDNESS IN LOVE.

"Hark how the bashful morn in vain
Courts the amorous Marigold
With sighing blasts and weeping rain;
Yet she refuses to unfold:
But when the planet of the day
Approacheth with his powerful ray,
Then she spreads, then she receives
His warmer beams into her virgin leaves.
So shalt thou thrive in love, fond boy;
If thy tears and sighs discover

Thy grief, thou never shalt enjoy
The just reward of a bold lover:
But when with moving accents thou
Shalt constant faith and service vow,
Thy Celia shall receive those charms
With open ears, and with unfolded arms."

HERRICK.

HOW MARIGOLDS CAME YELLOW.

"Jealous girls these sometime were;
While they lived, or lasted here;
Turn'd to flowers, still they be
Yellow, mark'd for jealousy."

G. WITHER.

"When with a serious musing I behold
The grateful and obsequious Marigold,
How duly every morning she displays
Her open breast when Phœbus spreads his rays;
How she observes him in his daily walk,
Still bending tow'rds him her small slender stalk;
How, when he down declines, she droops and mourns,
Bedew'd, as 't were, with tears, till he returns;
And how she veils her flowers when he is gone,
As if she scorned to be look'd upon

By an inferior eye; or did contemn
To wait upon a meaner light than him:
When this I meditate, methinks the flowers
Have spirits far more generous than ours,
And give us fair examples to despise
The servile fawnings and idolatries
Wherewith we court these earthly things below,
Which merit not the service we bestow."

This was almost the last appearance of the Marigold in poetry until Keats restored it after an interval of nearly two hundred years. It is the only instance of a flower so frequently named by the elder poets being entirely deserted for so long a period; nor has the beautiful appeal of Keats found a due response from his brother poets:—

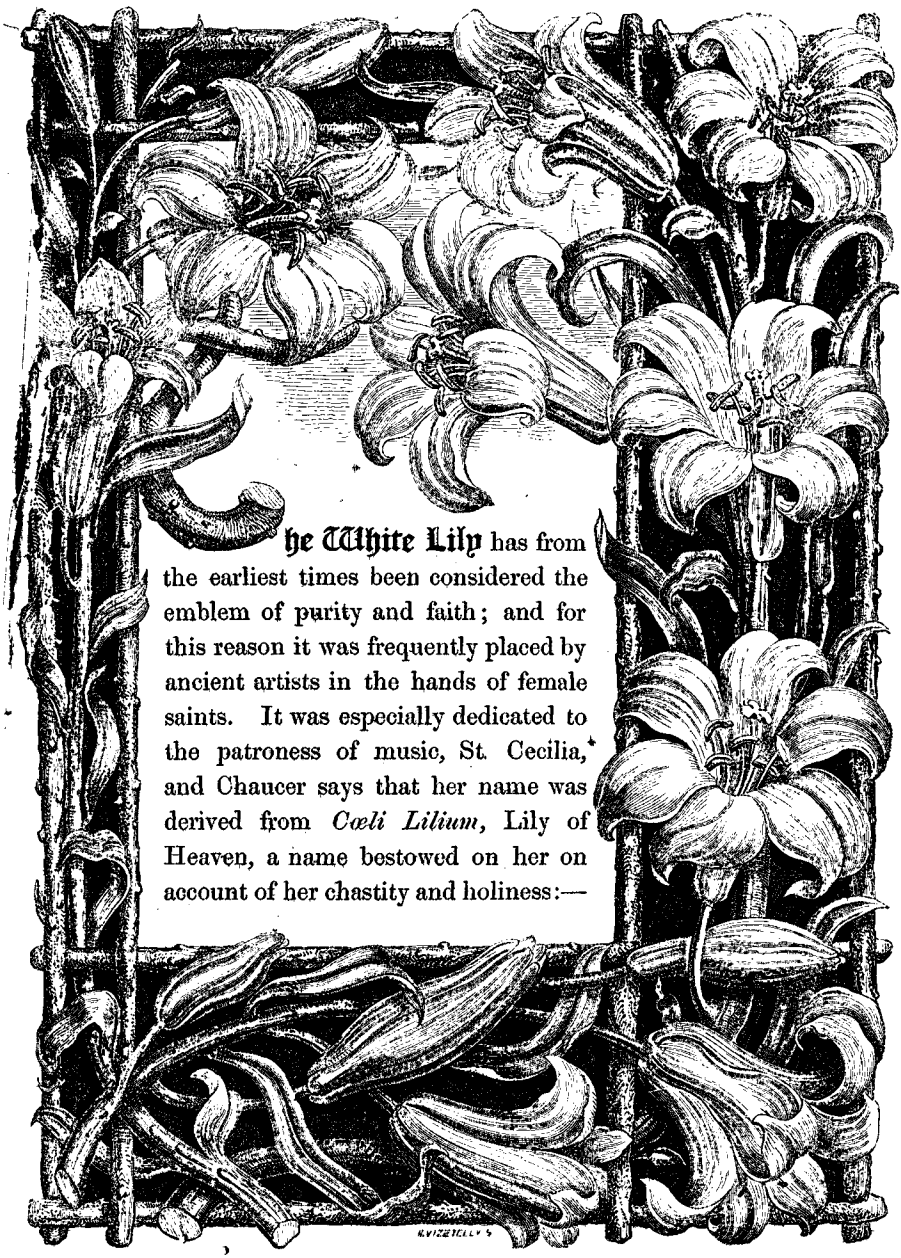
"Open afresh your round of starry folds,
Ye ardent Marigolds!
Dry up the moisture from your golden lids,
For great Apollo bids
That in these days your praises should be sung
On many harps, which he has lately strung;
And when again your dewiness he kisses,
Tell him I have you in my world of blisses:
So haply when I rove in some far vale,
His mighty voice may come upon the gale."

The Lily.

LILIUM CANDIDUM.

"Heavenly Lillyes with lokkerand toppis white
Openit and show their crestis redemyte,
The balmy vapour from their silken croppis
Distilling wholesome sugared honey-droppis."

G. DOUGLASS.



The White Lily has from the earliest times been considered the emblem of purity and faith; and for this reason it was frequently placed by ancient artists in the hands of female saints. It was especially dedicated to the patroness of music, St. Cecilia, and Chaucer says that her name was derived from *Cœli Lilium*, Lily of Heaven, a name bestowed on her on account of her chastity and holiness:—

"First I will to you the name of St. Cecilie
Expound, as men may in her story see:
It is to say, in English, Heaven's Lily
For pure chastnessè of virginity;
Or, for she whiteness had of honesty,
And green of conscience, and of good fame
The sweet savour, Lilie was her name."

Spenser paraphrases the lesson which our Saviour inculcated from the Lilies of the field; and by associating the Lily with the Flower-de-luce *(Iris)*, to which the White Lily was then considered to be nearly allied,* clearly distinguishes it from the Lily of the Valley, to which modern poets have occasionally applied the words of our Saviour:—

"The Lily, lady of the flowring field,
The Flowre-de-luce her lovely Paramoure,
Bid thee to them thy fruitless labours yield,
And soon leave off this toylesome weary stoure;
Lo, lo, how brave she decks her bountious boure,
With silken curtains and gold coverlets,
Therein to shroud her sumptuous Belamoure;

* Wherefore Shakspere says,

"——— Lilies of all kinds,
The Flower-de-luce being one."

Yet neither spins nor cardes, ne cares nor frets,
But to her mother Nature all her care she lets.

Why then dost thou, O man, that of them all
Art Lord, and eke of Nature Sovereign,
Wilfully make thyself a wretched thrall,
And waste thy joyous hours in needless pain,
Seeking for danger and adventures vain."

Spenser deduces another moral reflection from *the Lily*:—

"And that fair flower of beauty fades away,
As doth the Lily fresh before the sunny ray."

A. MONTGOMERY.

"I love the Lily as the first of flowers,
Whose stately stalk so straight up is and stay;
To whom th' lave ay lowly louts and [cowers],
As bound so brave a beauty to obey.
Among themselves it seems as they should [say],
'Sweet Lily, as thou art our lamp of light,
Receive our homage to thy honours aye,
As kind commands to render thee thy right,
Thy blissful beams with beauty burnish'd bright,
So honours all the garden where thou growis,
For sweetest smell and shining to the sight;

The heavens on thee such [matchless grace bestowis,]
That who perceives thy excellence by our's,
Must love th' Lily as the first of flowers.'"

Shakspere's happiest similes are often drawn from flowers, of which the following furnishes an example:—

"Shipwreck'd upon a kingdom, where no pity!
No friends! no hope! no kindred weep for me!
Almost no grave allow'd me! Like the Lily,
That once was mistress of the field and flourish'd,
I 'll hang my head and perish."

It is as the symbol of purity that Guiderus metaphorically calls Imogen a Lily, when she is borne in by his brother apparently dead:—

"—— O sweetest, fairest Lily!
My brother wears thee not one half so well,
As when thou grew'st thyself."

Shakspere also makes use of the Lily to illustrate the truth that the discovered faults of those whom we love and supposed to be faultless, strike and pain us more than the vices of those from whom we scarcely expected better things:—

"The summer's flower is to the summer sweet,
Though to itself it only live and die;
But if that flower with base infection meet,
The basest weed outbraves his dignity:
For sweetest things turn sourest by their deeds;
Lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds."

A pretty conceit is that where Venus takes the hand of the cold-blooded Adonis:—

"Full gently now she takes him by the hand,
A Lily prison'd in a jail of snow."

Lilies and Roses came to be mere synonymes for the red and white of a lady's face, and numerous are the conceits and endeavours to vary the phraseology of the metaphor. Shakspere describes the blushes in the cheeks of the sleeping Lucretia as

"This silent war of Lilies and of Roses;"

Carew says of his lady,

"In her cheeks are to be seen
Of flowers both the King and Queen,
Thither by the Graces led,
And freshly laid in nuptial bed;"

and P. Fletcher says,

"A bed of Lilies flower upon her cheek,
And in the midst was set a circling Rose."

Infinitely more manly than these fanciful puerilities is sturdy Ben Jonson's moral drawn from the Lily:—

"It is not growing like a tree
In bulk, doth make men better be;
Or standing long an oak, three hundred year,
To fall a log at last, dry, bald, and sear:
A Lily of a day
Is fairer far, in May,
Altho' it fall and die that night;
It was the plant and flower of light.
In small proportions we just beauties see;
And in short measures life may perfect be."

The Rose and the Lily, as emblems of the sexes, were always strewed in the bridal path. Hence Ben Jonson says,

"See how with roses, and with Lilies shine,
Lilies and roses, flowers of either sex,
The bright bride's paths, embellished more than thine,
With light of love this pair doth intertex!

Stay, the virgins sow,
Where she shall go,
The emblems of their way.
O, now thou smil'st, fair sun, and shin'st, as thou would'st stay."

The Earl of Stirling highly eulogises the Lily:—

"Here white's perfection, emblem of things pure,
The lightning Lilies, Beauty's colours rear."

Niccols is indebted for most of his inspiration to Spenser, as in the following comparison:—

"The lovely Lily, that fair flower for beauty past, compare,
Whom winter's cold keen breath had killed and blasted all her fair,
Might teach the fairest under heaven, that beauty's freshest green,
When spring of youth is spent, will fade as it had never been."

The Lily struck down by storms has often been made use of to allegorize the fate of beauty depressed by misfortune; thus P. Fletcher:—

"All so a Lily, press'd with heavy rain,
Which fills her cup with showers up to the brinks,
The weary stalk no longer can sustain
The head, but low beneath the burden sinks."

Drayton, who is fond of weaving wreaths promises an Anadem of Lilies:—

"With full-leaved Lilies I will stick
Thy braided hair all o'er so thick,
That from it a light shall throw,
Like the sun's upon the snow."

Browne in his Language of Flowers applies to the Lily its usual character:—

"The spotless Lily, by whose pure leaves be
Noted the chaste thoughts of virginity."

When the elder poets speak of Lilies amongst English wild flowers, they generally mean a species of Daffodil (perhaps the Primrose-peerless Daffodil, *Narcissus biflorus*, of a delicate creamy-white colour), which was considered to be a species of the Lily tribe. Their names are therefore frequently associated, as in Spenser:—

"Strow me the ground with daffadowndillies,
And cowslips, and king-cups, and loved Lillies."

Drayton expressly mentions the near relationship of the Daffodil and the Lily, which he is enweaving in a garland composed wholly of wild flowers:—

" —— there prick they in the Lily,
And near to that again her *sister* Daffadilly;"

and in another garland his directions are

" See that there be stores of Lilies,
Called of shepherds Daffadillies."

But when later poets mention the Lily as an indigenous English plant they probably mean the Lily of the Valley, and we have therefore placed the extracts in which the Lily is so named under that head.

HERRICK.

HOW LILIES CAME WHITE.

" White though ye be, yet, Lilies, know,
From the first ye were not so:
But I 'll tell ye
What befell ye.
Cupid and his mother lay
In a cloud; while both did play,
He with his pretty finger press'd

The ruby niplet of her breast;
Out of the which th' cream of light,
Like to a dew,
Fell down on you,
And made ye white."

Andrew Marvell occasionally varies the stern duties of a patriot with the lighter labours of the poet; and in the little poem, "The Nymph complaining for the death of her Fawn," he gives a beautiful proof of the versatility of his talents. We can, however, only find room for so much as describes the lilied couch of the little favourite:—

"I have a garden of my own,
But so with roses overgrown,
And Lilies, that you would it guess
To be a little wilderness;
And all the spring-time of the year
It loved only to be there.
Among the beds of Lilies I
Have sought it oft, where it should lie;
Yet could not, till itself would rise,
Find it, although before mine eyes;
For in the flaxen Lilies' shade,
It like a bank of Lilies laid.
Upon the roses it would feed,

Until its lips ev'n seem'd to bleed;
And then to me 'twould boldly trip,
And print those roses on my lip.
But all its chief delight was still
On roses thus itself to fill;
And its pure virgin limbs to fold
In whitest sheets of Lilies cold.
Had it lived long, it would have been
Lilies without, roses within."

For the following lines, Young must have been indebted to P. Fletcher; a better poet than himself, but who together with most other Elizabethan poets had fallen into oblivion in Young's time, and from whom therefore he might safely plagiarize:—

"Thus the fair Lily, when the sky 's o'ercast,
At first but shudders in the feeble blast;
But when the winds and weighty rains descend,
The fair and upright stem is seen to bend;
Till broke at length, its snowy leaves are shed,
And strew with dying sweets their native bed."

Young, in his usual pompous strain, apostrophises "Queen Lilies!" The "mine excepted" is a rare specimen of the "art of sinking," and quite burlesques the intended moral:—

"Queen Lilies! and ye painted populace!
Who dwell in fields, and lead ambrosial lives;
In morn and evening dew your beauties bathe,
And drink t' sun, which gives your cheeks to glow,
And out-blush (*mine* excepted) every fair;
* * * Ye lovely fugitives!
Coeval race with man! for man you smile;
Why not smile *at* him too? You share indeed
His sudden pass; but not his constant pain!"

MRS. TIGHE.

THE LILY.

"How wither'd, perish'd seems the form
Of yon obscure unsightly root!
Yet from the blight of wintry storm
It hides secure the precious fruit.

The careless eye can find no grace,
No beauty in its scaly folds,
Nor see within the dark embrace
What latent loveliness it holds.

Yet in that bulb, those sapless scales,
The Lily wraps her silver vest,

Till vernal suns and vernal gales
Shall kiss once more her fragrant breast.

* * * * *

Oh! many a stormy night shall close
In gloom upon the barren earth,
While still, in undisturb'd repose,
Uninjured lies the future birth;

And Ignorance, with sceptic eye,
Hope's patient smile shall wondering view;
Or mock her fond credulity,
As her soft tears the spot bedew.

Sweet smile of Hope, delicious tear!
The sun, the shower indeed shall come;
The promised verdant shoot appear,
And Nature bid her blossoms bloom.

And thou, O virgin Queen of Spring!
Shalt from thy dark and lowly bed,
Bursting thy green sheath's silken string,
Unveil thy charms, and perfume shed;

Unfold thy robes of purest white,
Unsullied from their darksome grave,
And thy soft petals' silvery light
In the mild breeze unfetter'd wave."

We have omitted nearly all the merely technical passages in which poets, by virtue of established precedent, have typified fairness by the Lily, as they are generally deficient in beauty, and are intended rather to do honour to the subject of the writer's verse than to "the Lady of the flowering field" of the elder poets, and of Cowper:—

"The Lily's height bespoke command,—
A fair imperial flower!—
She seem'd design'd for Flora's hand,
The sceptre of her power."

T. Moore acknowledges his obligations to Mrs. Tighe for the image contained in the following stanza of one of his beautiful Irish Melodies:—

"*Unchill'd by the rain, and unwaked by the wind,*
The Lily lies sleeping through Winter's cold hour,
Till Spring with a touch her dark slumber unbind,
And day-light and liberty bless the young flower.
Erin! oh Erin! *thy* Winter is past,
And the hope that lived through it shall blossom at last."

Keats says of "white-plumed Lilies" that they

"Are emblems true of hapless lovers dying;"

but Shelley, when he gave utterance to his feelings on the death of his friend in the beautiful elegy entitled "Adonais," appropriately applies the image of the broken Lily to Keats himself:—

"Lament anew Urania!——
Most musical of mourners weep anew!
Thy extreme hope, the loveliest, and the last,
The bloom, whose petals, nipt before they blew,
Died on the promise of the fruit, is waste;
The broken Lily lies—the storm is overpast."

Shelley's description of the growing Lily is highly fanciful:—

"And the wand-like Lily which lifted up,
As a Mœnad, its moonlight-colour'd cup,
Till the fiery star, which is its eye,
Gazed through clear dew on the tender sky."

Byron's lines to his sister from the banks of the Rhine next claim attention:—

"I send the Lilies given to me;
Though long before thy hand they touch,

I know that they must wither'd be;
But yet reject them not as such;
For I have cherish'd them as dear,
Because they yet may meet thine eye,
And guide thy soul to mine even here,
When thou behold'st them drooping nigh,
And know'st them gather'd by the Rhine,
And offer'd from my heart to thine!"

Notwithstanding the wild excesses into which Byron was driven, there undoubtedly lay in the deep fountains of his heart a craving desire to be loved, an overpowering wish for repose on *one pure heart*. It breathes in the previous lines; it sullied his whole life and flung him into reckless dissipation. We see the same aspiration in his almost extravagant love of the sublime and solitary in nature, the boundless ocean, and "the herbless granite where the foot dare not tread;" we see it again in his love for

"The helpless looks of blooming Infancy,
Even in its earliest nurture;"

and we have another instance in the dedication of Childe Harold, a work in which all the darkest passions of his soul are intensely pourtrayed, to a lovely child of tender years. It was because he

felt that uncontrollable desire for rest and purity to be in great part the *result* of the lassitude of dissipation, and the fruitless pursuit of happiness, that he says,

"—— nor question why
To one so young my strain I would commend,
But bid me with my wreath one matchless Lily blend."

Unhappily this desire for love had too much of a selfish character to permit either himself or its object to be happy; and it is too probable that the inevitable fate of such a being as he desired to link with his destiny,—a being, gentle, loving, dependent, helpless,—would have been that of Medora, and the following would have been but too faithful a picture of their destiny:—

"His heart was *form'd for softness*—warp'd to wrong;
But sunk and chill'd, and petrified at last;
Yet tempests wear, and lightning cleaves the rock,
If such his heart, so shatter'd it the shock.
There grew one flower beneath its rugged brow,
Though dark the shade—it shelter'd—saved till now.

The thunder came—that bolt hath blasted both,
The Granite's firmness, and the Lily's growth:
The gentle plant hath left no leaf to tell
Its tale, but shrunk and wither'd where it fell;
And of its cold protector, blacken round
But shiver'd fragments on the barren ground."

L. E. L., who luxuriates in fanciful, though not always very correct descriptions of flowers, alludes to the golden anthers of the Lily:—

"Lilies, each a white-robed bride,
With treasures of pure gold inside,
Like marble towers a king has made."

Wordsworth acknowledges the "Queen Lily's" pre-eminence:—

"What flower in meadow-ground or garden grows
That to the towering Lily does not yield?"

And he also cites it as an instance of the "sweet uses of Adversity:"—

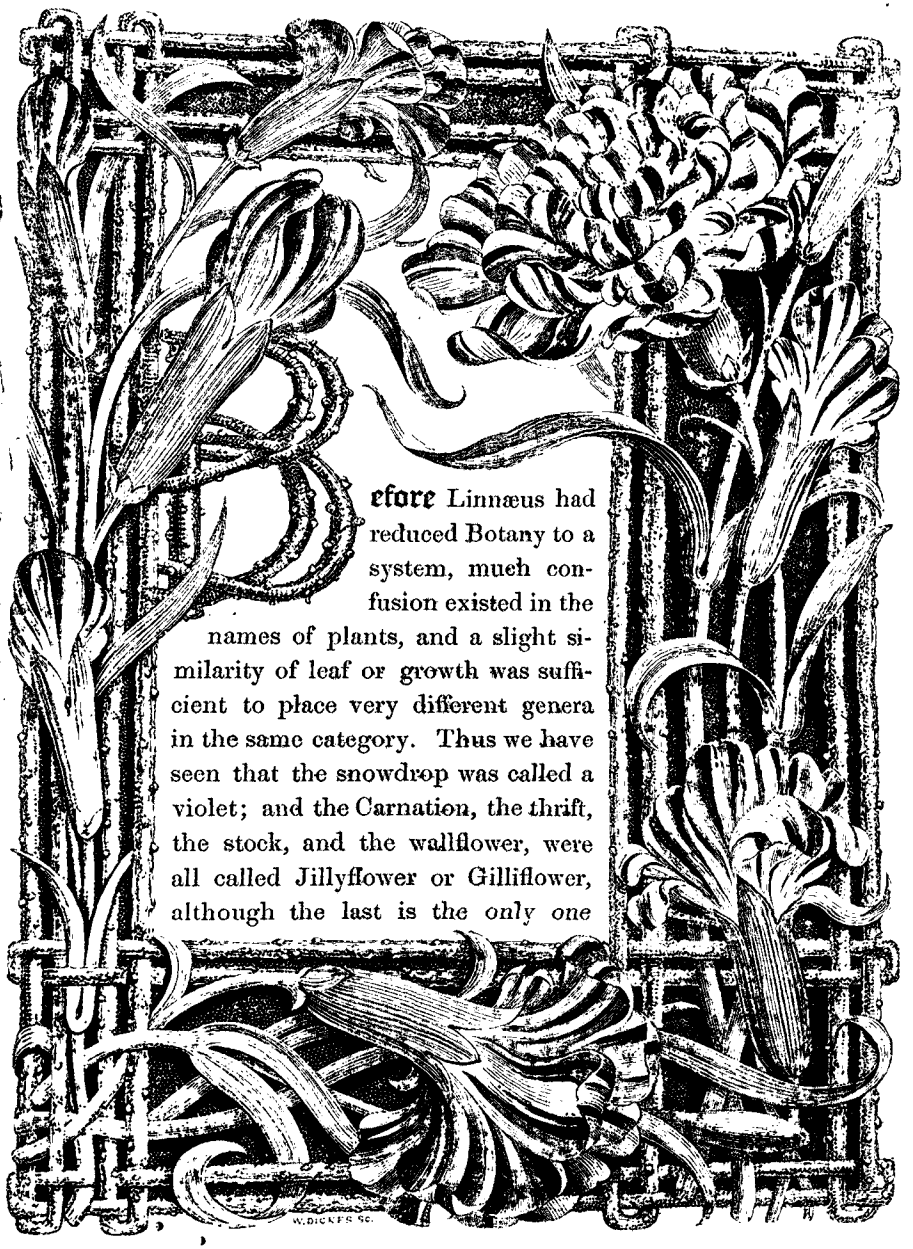
"——You have been wretched: yet
The silver shower, whose reckless burden weighs
Too heavily upon the Lily's head,
Oft leaves a saving moisture at the root."

The Carnation.

DIANTHUS CARYOPHYLLUS.

"——— the fond Carnation loves to shoot
A various colour from one parent root."

PRIOR.



Before Linnæus had reduced Botany to a system, much confusion existed in the names of plants, and a slight similarity of leaf or growth was sufficient to place very different genera in the same category. Thus we have seen that the snowdrop was called a violet; and the Carnation, the thrift, the stock, and the wallflower, were all called Jillyflower or Gilliflower, although the last is *the only one*

which still retains the name. The derivation of the word Gilliflower is generally considered doubtful. Writers of the Elizabethan age, however, make no difficulty about it; but frequently spell it July-flower, as if the name were derived from the month in which the Carnation begins to blossom. But the still earlier writers who, if this were the original word, would have been most likely to have used it in its primitive purity, never mention the word July-flower, but Jelifloure, the name which is now supposed to be a corruption.

This early usage proves that July-flower is in fact the corruption, and that the primitive word is one which approaches more nearly to the French *Girofle*.

The strong spicy smell of one variety of Carnation has obtained for it the name of Clove *par excellence*, and the fainter spicy smell of all the kinds may likewise have caused them to have received the name of the aromatic which it most resembled. That there was a spice bearing the same name, we learn from Chaucer, and we have ourselves no doubt that it affords the true derivation :—

"There was eke waxing many a spice,
As Clove, *Gilofre*, and Licorice,
Gingiber, and Grain-de-Paris,
Canell, and Setewale of price,
And many a spice delitable,
To eaten when men rise from table."

Chaucer spells the flower precisely in the same way in his description of a garden:—

"There springen herbès great and small,
The licoris and the setewale,
And many a Clove-gilofre."

The Carnation has always been held in high and deserved estimation as a garden-flower, and it was formerly the chief ornament of the parterre in the latter part of the summer, before the dahlia and other brilliant autumnal flowers of the present day were introduced.

G. Douglass's description is

"Gimp Jeriflouris, thereon flouris unschet."

And James I.,

"Red Jeroffleris with their stalkis grene."

Skelton, in his profuse praise of his mistress, does not omit to call her

"This Jelofer amiable,
This most goodly flowre."

By the time that Spenser wrote, Carnations had been divided into Carnations and Gilliflowers; a division which seems to be equivalent to that in present use: viz., Carnations and Piccotees; or, as Parkinson says, "we call them in English, the greatest kinds, Carnations, and the others Gilloflowers (*quasi* July-flowers);" and to these may be added the Sops-in-wine, which was a name given to a small variety of the Clove-carnation, from the custom of soaking its flowers in wine to impart a slight spicy flavour to a liqueur, formerly held in high estimation as a cordial.

Spenser introduces all the kinds:—

"Bring hither the pink and purple cullumbine,
With Gylliflowers;
Bring Coronations and Sops-in-wine,
Worn of paramours."

And Ben Jonson mentions "sweet Sops-in-wine" with "rich Carnations."

When Shakspere made Perdita resolutely refuse to give Carnations a place in her garden, on

account of the unnatural way in which they were said to be propagated, he would appear to have poetized a popular prejudice against increasing them by grafts; for Parkinson, writing about the same time, also protests against that mode of propagation, and for the same reasons. After describing the usual ways, by layers and pipings, he says, "As for a third way, by grafting one into or upon another, I know none such to be true, nor to be of any more worth than an old wives' tale: both *Nature, reason, and experience all contesting against* such an idle fancy." Parkinson did not publish till after Shakspere's death; but it is not likely that so excellent an old gardener should have adopted this notion from the poet. It is much more probable that they both express the usual argument against an operation said to have been performed. Perdita's encomium on "the fairest flowers o' the season," is also borne out by Parkinson: "Carnations and Gilliflowers be the chiefest flowers of account in our English Garden;" and again he enthusiastically exclaims: "But what shall I say to the queene of delight and of flowers, Carnations and Gilliflowers, whose bravery, variety, and sweet smell joined together, tyeth every one's affection

with great earnestnesse both to like and to have them?"

In Perdita's resolute objection against these favourite flowers, there is a pretty feminine wilfulness which gives a deep insight into her character, though we believe it has not been noticed by any of the critics. She will not, because she will not. She cannot argue the point with the wily courtier. She is silenced but not convinced. It may be as he says, but her heart feels a repugnance to that which "Nature contests against," and she will not yield. How many of us would be saved from error if, like Perdita, we would instantly obey the first impulse of our hearts, and not set self-interest and duty at argument together until the former gains the day;—the usual issue of such a contest.

But the deep philosophy of the dialogue is, that we have here the monarch, who is enraged at the notion of his princely son marrying a virtuous peasant, arguing in favour of disproportioned unions: "a gentler scion to the wildest stock;" while the lovely peasant, who would fain marry the prince, is unconsciously refusing to acknowledge the propriety of the dearest secret wish of her heart:—

"*Perdita.* Sir, the year growing ancient—
Not yet on summer's death, nor on the birth
Of trembling winter—the fairest flowers o' the season
Are our Carnations and streak'd Gillyflowers,
Which some call Nature's bastards: of that kind
Our rustic garden's barren; and I care not
To get slips of them.

Polixenes. Wherefore, gentle maiden,
Do you neglect them?

Per. For I have heard it said,
There is an art which, in their piedness, shares
With great creating Nature.

Pol. Say, there be;
Yet Nature is made better by no mean,
But Nature makes that mean: so, o'er that art,
Which, you say, adds to Nature, is an art
That Nature makes. You see, sweet maid, we marry
A gentler scion to the wildest stock;
And make conceive a bark of baser kind
By bud of nobler race. This is an art
Which does mend Nature—change it rather; but
The art itself is Nature.

Per. So it is.

Pol. Then make your garden rich in Gilly-flowers,
And do not call them bastards.
Per. I 'll not put
The dibble in earth to set one slip of them;
No more than, were I painted, I would wish
This youth should say, 't were well."

It is in this period that we first find the word July-flower introduced. Drayton proposes to ornament a wreath with

"The brave Carnation, with sweet and sovereign power,
(So of his colour call'd, although a July-flower)
With th' other of his kind, the speckled and the pale."

And again, in another wreath:—

"The curious choice clove July-flower,
Whose kinds hight the Carnation,
For sweetness of most sovereign power,
Shall help my wreath to fashion."

Drayton, who says of a lover,

"The July-flower declares his gentleness,"

differs greatly from Browne as to the character to

be assigned to it in the language of flowers; for the latter says,

"Carnations sweet, with colour like the fire,
The fit impresas for enflamed desire."

But the name Gilliflower was not quite lost; for *Barnfield* associates it with other Carnations: —

"There grows the Gilliflowre, ——
The scarlet dyed Carnation bleeding yet;——
The rose and speckled flower call'd Sops-in-wine."

And Fanshawe appropriately, though less poetically, calls it

"The Gillyflower, prince of the blood."

In old ballads the pre-eminence of the Carnation is often marked by its introduction into descriptions of Paradise; where also the Earl of Stirling places it, as

"The Gilliflower a quint-essence may be."

Sir Walter Scott, in his "Border Minstrelsy," has noticed this fact, for which he seems unable to account: "From whatever source," he says, "the popular ideas of heaven may be derived, the mention of Gillyflowers is not uncommon. Thus, in the 'Dead Men's Song':—

" 'The fields about this city faire
Were all with roses set;
Gillyflowers and Carnations faire
Which canker could not fret.' "

These remarks are made by way of annotation on the pathetic ballad, entitled " Clerk Sanders," in which the following lines occur :—

" Their beds are made in the Heavens high,
Down at the foot of our good Lord's knee,
Weel set about wi' Gillyflowers."

It may be suggested that the very high estimation in which the Gilliflower appears to have been held, sufficiently accounts for the celestial station assigned to it.

Even more celebrated poets have, like the unknown makers of simple ballads, introduced the flowers of earth among the joys of heaven. Spenser says of the soul " in blissful Paradise,"

" —— like a new-born babe it soft doth lie
In bed of lilies, wrapp'd in tender wise,
And compass'd all about with roses sweet,
And dainty violets from head to feet."

Milton likewise assumes that

"—— Earth hath this variety from Heaven,
Of pleasure situate in hill and dale;"
and that in the celestial abodes,
"With fresh flowerets hill and valley smiled."

HERRICK.

TO CARNATIONS.

"Stay while ye will, or go,
And leave no scent behind ye;
And trust me I shall know
The place where I may find ye.

Within my Lucia's cheek,
(Whose livery ye wear,)
Play ye at hide and seek,
I'm sure to find you there."

ON GILLIFLOWERS BEGOTTEN.

"What was't that fell but now
From that warm kiss of ours?
Look, look! by love, I vow,
They were two Gilliflowers.

Let's kiss, and kiss again;
For if so be our closes
Make Gilliflowers, then
I'm sure they'll fashion roses."

Herrick likewise proposes the following lines for "A Meditation for his Mistress:"—

"You are a lovely July-flower,
Yet one rude wind, or ruffling shower,
Will force you hence and in an hour.

You are the queen all flowers among,
But die you must, fair maid, ere long,
As he, the maker of this song."

Amidst the throng of new rivals,

"The fringed Carnation's varied vest,"

GAY.

has almost lost its place as a garden flower, and it has also been abandoned by the later poets; though Shenstone makes use of it to prove, that Nature is not a disciple of the utilitarian school, but has adorned the earth for the innocent recreation of man:—

"Let yon admired Carnation own,
Not all was meant for raiment, or for food,
Not all for needful use alone;
There, while the seeds of future blossoms dwell,
'Tis colour'd for the sight, perfumed to please the smell."

The Sunflower.

HELIANTHUS.

" ——— still her drooping head reclines
With faithful homage to his golden rays,
And though 'mid clouds their lustre he resigns,
An image of the constant heart displays,
While silent still she turns her fond pursuing gaze."

MRS. TIGHE.

The splendid annual of our gardens, which obtained its title from the resemblance which its broad radiant disk bears to the brilliant god of day, has, by virtue of its name, usurped the character of the flower of the Latin fable, which was said to turn its flowrets towards the sun, as he changes his place in the heavens; and some popular modern works on botany have gone so far as to assert, that such is the case with the *Helianthus*. But, in truth, the Sunflower has no such property,

but extends its flowers *indifferently to all points* of the compass.

The plant alluded to by Ovid, when he represented Clytia as pining to death for love of Apollo, and being changed by the unpitying God into a flower, which always turned to the sun, is, without doubt, the *Helianthemum*, or Sun-rose, which has all the properties ascribed to it by the poet.

Gower alludes to the fable, saying, in the quaint language of antiquity, that Clytia was changed

> "Into a floure was named Golde,
> Which stont governed of the sun."

And Drummond introduces it among other classical flowers:—

"Here Adon blush'd, and Clytia, all amazed,
Look'd pale, with him who in the fountain *gazed;*
The amaranthus smiled, and that sweet boy
Which sometime was the God of Delos' joy."

P. Fletcher, speaking of the Peruvian plant, says,—

"The Heliotrope unto cloth-of-gold aspires."

Thomson, first applying the Latin fable to the same plant, erroneously describes

" —— the lofty follower of the sun,
Sad when he sets, shuts up her yellow leaves,
Drooping all night; and when he warm returns,
Points her enamour'd bosom to his ray."

Ascribing to the Sunflower the same property, Harte aptly compares the flattering dependants on men in power to the " follower of the sun : "—

" So Turn-soles court the sun, with wry-neck'd heads,
True as a dial when their patrons shine:
But blank, if the said patrons power resign."

The name Turn-sole, equivalent to Heliotrope, is also used by Mason : —

" Turn-sole and piony, and all the train
That love to glitter in the noontide ray."

Langhorne makes the Sunflower's alleged adoration to the sun the subject of one of his fables :—

" So fair, each morn, so full of grace,
Within their little garden rear'd,
The Flower of Phœbus turn'd her face,
To meet the power she loved and fear'd.

And where, along the rising sky,
Her god in brighter glory burn'd,
Still there her fond observant eye,
And there her golden breast she turn'd.

When calling from their weary height
On western waves his beams to rest,
Still there she sought the parting sight,
And there she turn'd her golden breast."

Smart illustrates by it constancy in love and warmth of affection :—

" —— a Sunflower—this, fair one's, your due;
For it once was a maiden and love-sick like you—
'Oh! give it me quick, to my shepherd I'll run,
As true to his flame as this flower to the sun.'"

The same idea is more beautifully treated by Moore :—

"Oh! the heart that has truly loved, never forgets,
But as truly loves on to the close,
As the Sunflower turns to her god, when he sets,
The same look which she turned when he rose."

The Thistle.

CARDUUS.

"Thistle, all with prickles set."

W. BROWNE.

So very splendid are many individuals of the Thistle tribe, towering aloft with their elegantly cut leaves and crimson crowns, that, were it not for their profusion and the difficulty of eradicating them when once they have located themselves within the enclosure of the agriculturist, they would be highly prized as among the most beautiful of our native plants.

Scotland early furnished a bard to sing the honours of its chosen

flower, which though so often placed in rivalry with the Rose—the emblem of the sister country—was then bound to it by ties which proved the foundation of that permanent union which has added so much to the welfare of the two nations. We allude to the poem, entitled "The Thistle and the Rose," written by Dunbar in celebration of the marriage of James IV. of Scotland with Margaret, daughter of Henry VII., A. D. 1503; in the issue of which marriage—James I. of England and VI. of Scotland—the two crowns were united:—

"Then called she [Nature] all flowers that grow on field
Describing all their fashions and affairs;
Upon the awful Thistle she beheld,
And saw him keepèd with a bush of spears;
Considering him so able for the wars,
A radious crown of rubies she him gave,
And said, 'In field go forth and 'fend the lave.'

And since thou art a King, thou be discreet:
Herb without virtue thou hold not of sic price
As herb of virtue and of odour sweet;
And let no nettle, vile and full of vice,
Her fellow to the goodly flour-de-lyce;

Nor let no wild weed, full of churlishness,
Compare her to the lily's nobleness.

Nor hold none other flower in sic dainty
As the fresh rose of colour red and white;
For if thou dost, hurt is thine honesty,
Considering that no flower is so perfite,
So full of virtue, pleasaunce, and delight,
So full of blissful angelic beauty,
Imperial birth, honour, and dignity."

This passage has required no alteration to adapt it to modern diction except in its orthography, thus showing how greatly the language had advanced towards its present standard within a century after the death of Chaucer, though inferior, but better known, poets subsequently seemed to throw it back into almost its primitive uncouthness.

Shakspere, who may be supposed to have shared the farmer's antipathy to the Thistle, classes together

"Hateful docks, rough Thistles, kecksies, burs."

W. Browne, speaking of a different plant (*Sonchus Arvensis*) bearing a similar English

name, introduces us to an old game, which the gallant days of the second Charles probably rendered unpopular; as being—like the fabled belt presented to the faithless wife of King Arthur and the ladies of her court—too dangerous a test to be agreeable:—

"Upon the various earth's embroider'd gown,
There is a weed upon whose head grows down;
Sow-thistle 't is ycleped; whose downy wreath,
If any one can blow off at a breath,
We deem her for a maid."

Samuel Butler, author of Hudibras, who himself very much partook of the *Nemo me impune lacessit* character of the Thistle, has a "thought" upon this the only flower introduced into any of his works:—

"As Thistles wear the softest down,
To hide their prickles till they're grown,
And then declare themselves, and tear
Whatever ventures to come near;
So a smooth knave does greater feats
Than one that idly rails and threats,
And all the mischief that he meant
Does, like a rattle-snake, prevent."

But it is to Scotland's bards that we must resort for panegyrics on the imperial Thistle. And they are not wanting. It is a subject which has warmed many a patriot heart; nor can we wonder that the plant which has risen superior to all attacks, and severely taught to all aggressors the truth of her motto, should be regarded with love and respect by those who have fought under her banner.

Hamilton is enthusiastic on

" —— the Thistle rude,
An armed warrior, with his host of spears.
Thrice happy plant! fair Scotia's greatest pride,
Emblem of modest valour, unprovoked
That harmeth not, provoked that will not bear
Wrong unrevenged; what though the humble root
Dishonour'd erst, the growth of every field,
Arose unheeded through the stubborn soil,
Jejune; though softer flowers, disdainful, fly
Thy fellowship, nor in the nosegay join,
Ill-matched compeers! not less the dews of heav'n
Bathe thy rough cheeks, and wash thy warlike mail,
Gift of indulgent skies. * * *

The Thistle happier far
Exalted into nobler fame, shall rise
Triumphant o'er each flower, to Scotia's bards
Subject of lasting song."

So warm-hearted a patriot as Burns we may be sure would not despise his country's emblematic flower; even when yet a boy he spared

"The rough bur-Thistle spreading wide
Amang the bearded bear,
I turn'd my weeding heuk aside
An' spar'd the symbol dear."

JAMES HOGG.

THE FLOWERS OF SCOTLAND.

"What are the flowers of Scotland,
All others that excel?
The lovely flowers of Scotland,
All others that excel!
The Thistle's purple bonnet,
And bonny heather-bell,
O they're the flowers of Scotland
All others that excel!

Tho' England eyes her roses,
With pride she 'll ne'er forego,

The rose has oft been trodden
By foot of haughty foe;
But the Thistle in her bonnet blue
Still nods out ow'r the fell,
And dares the proudest foeman
To tread the heather-bell.

For the wee bit leaf of Ireland,
Alack and well-a-day!
For ilka hand is free to pu'
An' steal the gem away:
But the Thistle in her bonnet blue
Still bobs aboon them a';
At her the bravest darena blink,
Or gie his mou' a thraw.

Up wi' the flowers o' Scotland,
The emblems of the free,
Their guardians for a thousand years,
Their guardians still we'll be.
A foe had better brave the deil
Within his reeky cell,
Than our Thistle's purple bonnet,
Or bonny heather-bell."

The English poets only know

"The Thistle's rolling wheel, of silken down."

LEYDEN.

as a troublesome weed; and perhaps some readers may be surprised to find that it has a place in our Pleasaunce. But the poets, not we, have placed it there, and therefore we may not omit

"The imperial Thistle, not unfurnish'd
With its appropriate grace, yet rather seeking
To be admired than coveted or loved;"

WORDSWORTH.

even tho' it may be a less fitting decoration to the garden than to the barren heath, where

"Thistles stretch their prickly arms afar,
And to the ragged infant threaten war."

CRABBE.

For equally is it the child of Nature, and perhaps even more useful than many a more prized flower. At least it proves that

"—— Nature surely never ranges,
Ne'er quits her gay and flowery crown;
But, ever joyful, merely changes
The primrose for the Thistle down."

B. CORNWALL.

Sweet Herbs.

"Some Lavender — with Rosemary and Bays,
Sweet Marjoram, with her like, sweet Basil rare for smell:
The healthful Balm and Mint:—
The scentful Camomile, the ver'rous Costmarie;
Clear Hyssop, and therewith the comfortable Thyme,
Germander with the rest, each thing then in her prime.
Amongst these strewing kinds some other wild that grow,
As Burnet, all abroad, and Meadow-wort they throw."

DRAYTON.

Sweet Herbs having been used by our ancestors for strewings in lieu of carpets, it was a matter of considerable interest to them to select such as were agreeably scented and refreshing. Very numerous are the recipes to be found in old books for "making a sweet strewing," in the composition of which Marjoram, Meadow-sweet, Thyme, Balm, Rosemary, Basil, Hyssop, Germander, and Lavender, were the favourite ingredients.

Herbs being thus always at hand, they are frequently mentioned by the old poets, and we shall have occasion here to introduce some who have not mentioned any other flowers, and consequently whose works have not been quoted from elsewhere. These were for the most part town-bred poets, to whom, though ignorant of flowers, the strewings at their feet were of course as familiar as any other household furniture.

Within this category however Dunbar, whom Sir W. Scott has eulogized as "Scotland's sweetest poet," must not be comprised; for although a courtier, he was sincerely attached to the beauties of Nature. In this instance, however, the courtier is speaking, and he puns on the word Rue—ruth or pity—in hopes of exciting that feeling in the breast of an obdurate mistress.

TO A LADY.

"Sweet rose of virtue and of gentleness,
Delightsome Lily of every lustiness,
Richest in bounty, and in beauty clear,
And every virtue that is [held most] dear,
Except only that you are merciless.

Into your garden this day I did pursue,
There saw I flowers that fresh were of hue,

Both white and red most lusty were to seen,
And wholesome herbis upon stalkis green;
Yet leaf nor flower find could I none of RUE.

I doubt that March with his cold blastis keen
Has slain this gentle herb that I of mean;
Whose piteous death does to my heart sic pain,
That I would make to plant his root again,
So comforting his levis unto me been."

In many of the following extracts we have specimens of the Language of Flowers, which, as we have before had occasion to observe, was a science well understood by our rural ancestors.

TURBERVILLE.

OF CERTAIN FLOWERS SENT HIM BY HIS LOVE UPON SUSPICION OF CHANGE.

"Your flowers for their hue
Were fresh and fair to see:
Yet was your meaning not so true
As you it thought to be.

In that you sent me Balm,
I judge you meant thereby,
That clean extinct was all my flame,
From whence no sparks did fly.

Your Fennell did declare
(As simple men can show)
That flattery in my breast I bear,
Where friendship ought to grow.

A Daisy doth express
Great folly to remain,
I speak it not by rote or guess,
Your meaning was so plain.

Rosemary put in mind
The Bays were out of thought;
And Love-in-ydle came behind
For love that long was sought.

Your Cowslips did portend
That care was laid away;
And Eglantine did make an end,
Where sweet with sour lay;

As though the leaves at first
Were sweet when love began;
But now, in proof, the pricks were curst,
And hurtful to the man."

John Skelton has a complimentary song to a lady, the burden of which ascribes to her the virtuous qualities of the herb Marjoram:—

TO MAISTRESS MARGARY WENTWORTH.

"With Marjerain gentle,
The flower of goodly head,
Embroider'd the mantle
Is of your maidenhead.

Plainly I can not glose,
Ye be, as I divine,
The pretty primerose,
The goodly columbine.

With Marjerain gentle," &c.

A copious catalogue of the Herbs cultivated in the garden in Spenser's time, with the various uses ascribed to each in the pharmacopeia of the herbalist, is to be found in the elegant poem, "Muiopotmos, or the Fate of the Butterfly:"—

"The wholesome Sage, and Lavender still gray,
Rank smelling Rue, and Cummin good for eyes,
The Roses reigning in the pride of May,
Sharp Isope, good for green wounds' remedies,
Fair Marigolds, and bees alluring Thime,
Sweet Majoram, and Daysies decking prime.

Coole Violets, and Orpine growing still,
Embathed Balme, and cheerful Galingale,

Fresh Costmarie, and breathful Camomill,
Dull Poppy, and drink-quickning Setuale,
Veine-healing Verven, and head-purging Dill,
Sound Savorie, and Bazil hartie-hale,
Fat Colworst, and comforting Perseline,
Cold Lettuce, and refreshing Rosmarine."

But the most beautiful and affecting instances of the Language of Flowers are those by Shakspere in relation to some of the Sweet Herbs. In sweetness and pathos Ophelia's exquisite playings with the allegorical meanings of herbs and flowers are unrivalled :—

"There 's Rosemary, that 's for remembrance : pray you, love, remember,"

she says to her brother. To the king, we may suppose, is given the "Fennel;" and then what force does Turberville's interpretation of the meaning of this plant give to her action! "flattery in your breast you bear, where friendship ought to grow." She adds to the gift "Columbines;" and why? to let him know that she feels that she has been forsaken; or, perhaps, generously to alleviate the bitterness of the reproach conveyed by the Fennel, by hinting to the conscience-

stricken king, that there is hope of mercy even for the most wicked; for W. Browne thus explains the mystery of Columbines:—

"The Columbine in tawny often taken,
Is then ascribed to such as are forsaken;
Flora's choice buttons of a russet dye
Is hope even in the depths of misery."

To the queen she says,

"There's Rue for you; and here's some for me: we may call it herb of Grace o' Sundays:—you may wear your Rue with a difference;"

that is, differently from *me*, who must retain it in its common acceptation, ruth, sorrow; but with the same kindliness of feeling which we have supposed her to exhibit towards the king, she hints to the equally guilty queen that grace is to be found if duly sought.

This is not the only instance in which Shakspere has availed himself of the significant meanings attached to Herbs. The faithful servant of the Queen of the deposed Richard II. feels no diminution of affection for his mistress, notwithstanding her loss of station; and with a presentiment that he must now leave the garden which

it had been his delightful task to cultivate, he determines to perpetuate the remembrance of the weeping queen in a truly characteristic manner:—

"Here did she drop a tear; here, in this place,
I'll set an herb of Rue, sour herb of Grace:
Rue even for ruth, here shortly shall be seen,
In the remembrance of a weeping queen."

But even Rue is capable of an agreeable association, for it is the herb of grace, and an evergreen; and on a festive occasion these more cheerful qualities are appropriately brought forward. Thus Perdita addresses her ancient guests *Polixenes* and *Camillo*:—

"Reverend Sirs,
For you there's Rosemary, and Rue; these keep
Seeming and savour all the winter long:
Grace and remembrance be to you both,
And welcome to our shearing.

Polixenes. Shepherdess
(A fair one are you), well you fit our ages
With flowers of winter."

Drayton makes his amorous Shepherds talk in this sweet language:—

"He to his lass his Lavender has sent,
Shewing her love, and doth requital crave;
Him Rosemary, his sweet-heart, whose intent
Is, that he her should in remembrance have.
Roses, his youth and strong desire express;
Her Sage, doth shew his sovereignty in all;
Thyme, truth."

The various Herbs described in the motto to this chapter were the strewings of the Church on the occasion of a marriage—that of the Tame and the Isis; and from another work of Drayton's we learn some of the other uses which were made of Herbs, and the estimation in which they were respectively held:—

"With Basil then I will begin,
Whose scent is wondrous pleasing;
This Eglantine I'll next put in,
The sense with sweetness seizing.
Then in my Lavender I'll lay,
Muscado put among it,
And here and there a leaf of Bay,
Which still shall run along it.
Germander, Marjoram, and Thyme,
Which used are for strewing;—
Costmary that so likes the cup,

And next it Penny-royal;
Then Burnet shall bear up with this,
Whose leaf I greatly fancy,
Some Camomile doth not amiss,
With Savory and some Tansy;
Then here and there I'll put a sprig
Of Rosemary into it."

Every season, as well as every ceremony, had its appropriate strewings. Christmas was ushered in with Rosemary, Holly, and Mistletoe; which, on Candlemas-day, were succeeded by Box and other evergreens. But Herrick has so sweetly chronicled these matters, that for a full knowledge of them it is only necessary to read his lines:—

CEREMONIES FOR CANDLEMAS EVE.

"Down with the Rosemary and Bayes,
Down with the Misletoe;
Instead of Holly now upraise
The greener Box, for show.

The Holly hitherto did sway;
Let Box now domineer,
Until the dancing Easter-day,
Or Easter's eve appear.

Then youthful Box, which now hath grace
Your houses to renew,
Grown old, surrender must his place,
Unto the crisped Yew.

When Yew is out, then Birch comes in,
And many flowers beside;
Both of a fresh and fragrant kin,
To honour Whitsuntide!

Green Rushes then, and sweetest Bents,
With cooler Oaken boughs,
Come in for comely ornaments
To re-adorn the house.
Thus times do shift; each thing his turn does hold;
New things succeed, as former things grow old."

Although Herbs are no longer used for strewings, yet their value as ingredients of the pot is as fully acknowledged as ever; and, therefore, those Herbs, which at one time it was sufficient to cull where

"—— their emollient leaves
On every bush, on every bank display,"

DODSLEY.

were soon transferred to the garden, and every cottager's little plot of land had its herb-bed from which to procure

"The winter's medicine or meal."

SMART.

Here were sure to be found

"The Marjoram comely to behold,
With Thyme, and ruddiest Marygold,
And Mint and Pennyroyal sweet,
To deck the cottage windows meet;
And Balm, that yields a finer juice
Than all that China can produce."

IBID.

Such a garden, moreover, Shenstone's immortalized Schoolmistress must have possessed:—

"Herbs too she knew, and well of each could speak
That in her garden sipp'd the silvery dew;
Where no vain flower disclosed a gaudy streak;
But herbs for use and physic, not a few
Of grey renown, within those borders grew:
The tufted Basil, pun-provoking Thyme,
Fresh Baum, and Marygold of cheerful hue;
The lowly Gill, that never dares to climb;
And more I fain would sing, disdaining here to rhyme.

Yet Euphrasy may not be left unsung,
That gives dim eyes to wander leagues around;
And pungent Radish biting infants' tongue;
And Plantain ribb'd, that heals the reaper's wound,
And Marjoram sweet in shepherd's posie found;
And Lavender, whose spike of azure bloom
Shall be, ere-while, in arid bundles bound,
To lurk amidst the labours of her loom,
And crown her kerchiefs clean with mickle rare
perfume.

And here trim Rosemarine, that whilom crown'd
The daintiest garden of the proudest peer;
Ere, driven from its envied site, it found
A sacred shelter for its branches here,
Where edged with gold its glittering skirts appear.
Oh wassel days! O customs meet and well!
Ere this was banish'd from its lofty sphere:
Simplicity then sought this humble cell,
Nor ever would she more with thane and lordling
dwell."

The last stanza alludes to the old custom of dressing the principal dishes of the Christmas feast with Rosemary; thus an old Carol, printed in 1521, has

"The bore's head in hande bring I,
With garlandes gay and Rosemary."

And as late as 1707, an anonymous author says,

"Your Rosemary preserve to dress your beef;"

customs which have been celebrated by modern poets. Southey mentions

"the boar's head,
Crown'd with gay garlands and with Rosemary,
Smoked on the Christmas board;"

a splendid old English dish which Sir W. Scott does not forget in his heart-thrilling description of ancient Christmas:—

"Then the grim boar's head frown'd on high,
Crested with Bays and Rosemary."

It does not appear that our ancestors, in displaying the Rosemary at their jovial merry-makings, were influenced by the solemn feeling of the ancients, who on similar occasions had a veiled skeleton seated at the festive board to remind the guests that in the "midst of life we are in death." But unless there was some such salutary memento sought to be conveyed, it seems to have been a strange inconsistency to deck the good things

of life with the emblems of the dead. Yet, the Rosemary was devoted to both purposes; and perhaps it will be most fitting to close our reflections with the more solemn associations connected with

"—— the humble Rosemary,
Whose sweets so thanklessly are shed,
To scent the desert and the dead."

MOORE.

H. K. WHITE.

TO THE HERB ROSEMARY.

"Sweet scented flower! who art wont to bloom
On January's front severe,
And o'er the wintry desert drear
To waft thy waste perfume!
Come, thou shalt form my nosegay now,
And I will bind thee round my brow;
And as I twine the mournful wreath
I'll weave a melancholy song;
And sweet the strain shall be, and long,
The melody of death.

Come, funeral flower! who lov'st to dwell
With the pale corse in lonely tomb,
And throw across the desert gloom
A sweet decaying smell.

Come, press my lips, and lie with me
Beneath the lowly alder tree!
And we will sleep a pleasant sleep,
And not a care shall dare intrude
To break the marble solitude,
So peaceful and so deep.

And hark! the wind-god as he flies,
Moans hollow in the forest trees,
And sailing on the gusty breeze,
Mysterious music dies.
Sweet flower! that requiem wild is mine,
It warns me to the lonely shrine,
The cold turf altar of the dead!
My grave shall be in yon lone spot,
Where as I lie, by all forgot,
A dying fragrance thou wilt o'er my ashes shed."

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